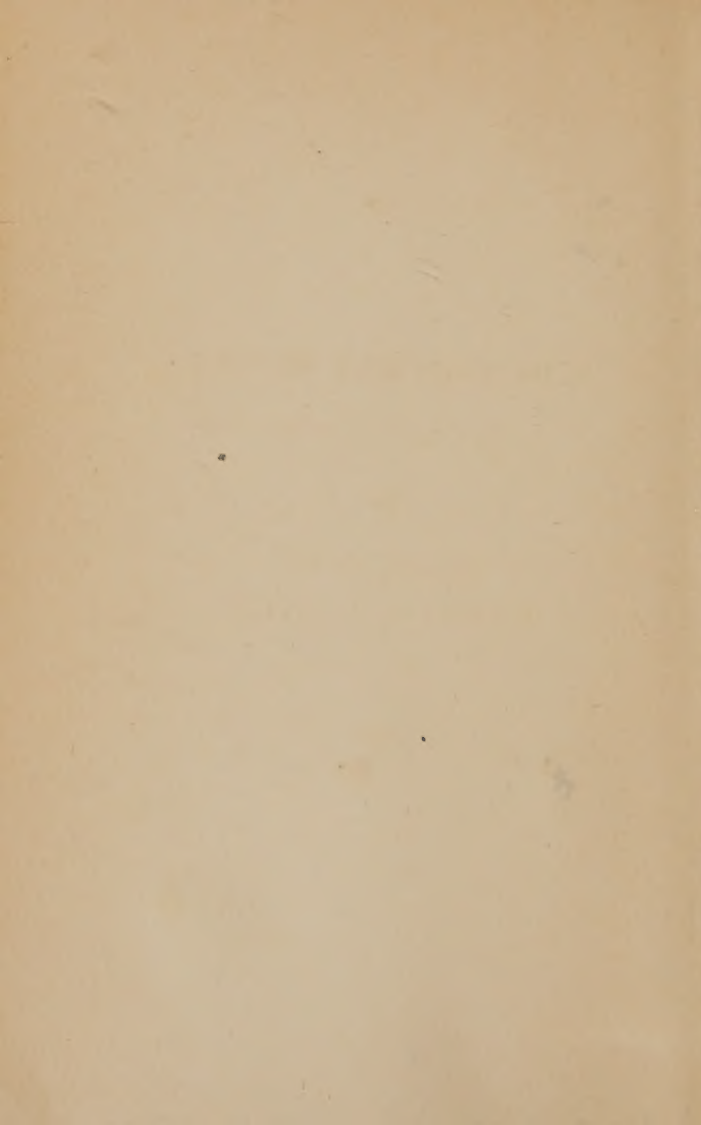


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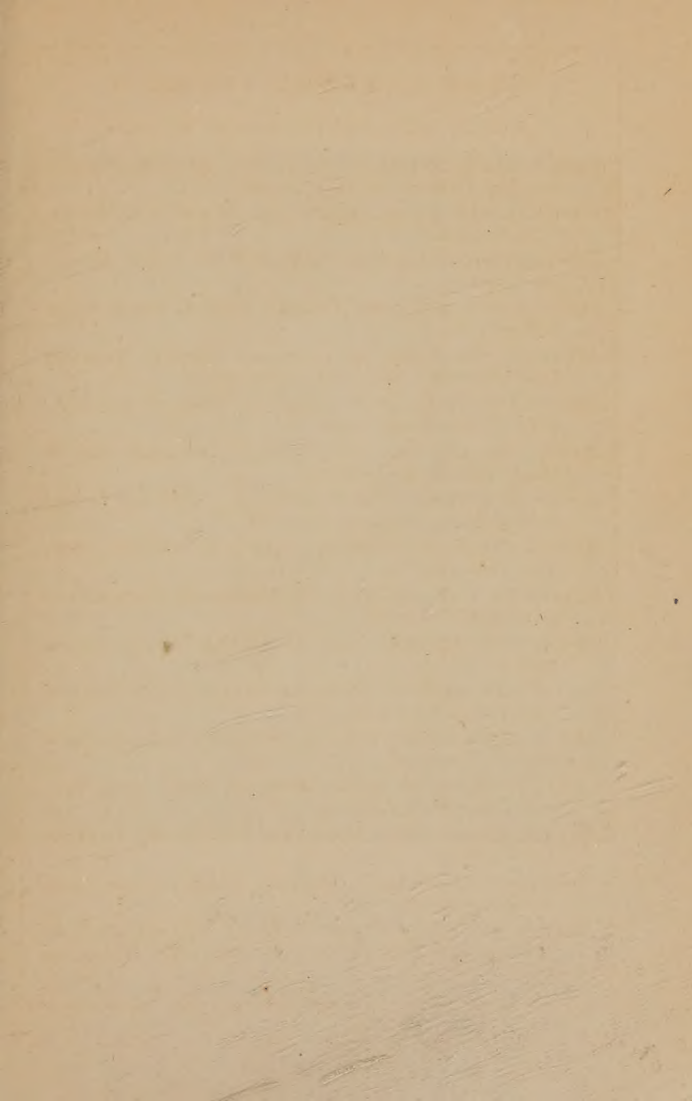
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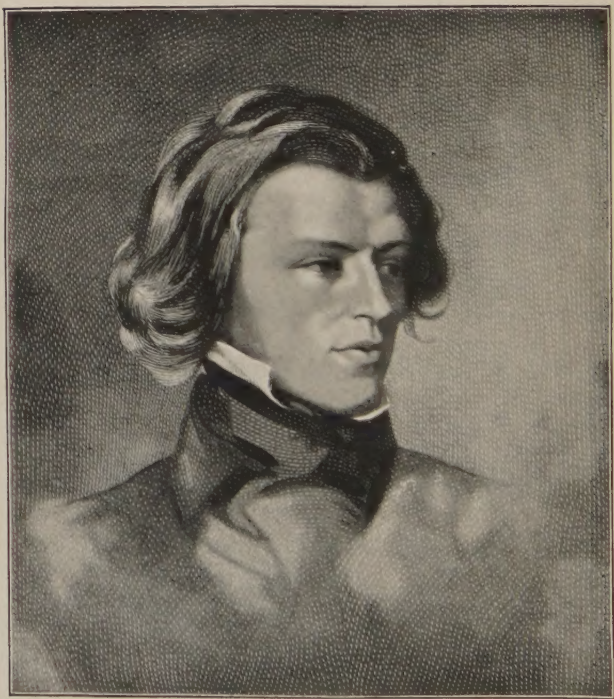
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KATHARINE LEE BATES, M.A.

PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN WELLESLEY COLLEGE



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PREFACE BY THE GENERAL EDITOR

THIS series of books aims, first, to give the English texts required for entrance to college in a form which shall make them clear, interesting, and helpful to those who are beginning the study of literature ; and, second, to supply the knowledge which the student needs to pass the entrance examination. For these two reasons it is called *The Gateway Series*.

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HENRY VAN DYKE.

PREFACE

THIS edition of *The Princess* is, of necessity, "a phantom of succession," immeasurably indebted to the editions that have preceded it and to the work of Tennyson scholars in general. Among the editors my chief acknowledgments are due to Professors Wallace, Cook, Woodberry, to Dr. Rolfe, and to Mr. Boynton. Among Tennyson biographers and critics I owe the most to the poet's son, author of the *Memoirs*, to Dr. Henry van Dyke, the Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, Messrs. Dawson and Waugh. Specific obligations I have been careful to record. The text is the standard text as published by Macmillan.

My only apology for another edition lies in its suggestions of protest against an exclusively masculine point of view. If this woman's university was a failure, let it be remembered as a university conceived and interpreted by men. Princess Ida herself, persistently put in the wrong by poet and prince, by editors and critics, might well, like the exasperated Wife of Bath, in Chaucer's poem, turn upon them all with the question :

"Who peynted the leoun? Tel me who."

KATHARINE LEE BATES.

WELLESLEY, MASS.

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"Jesters do oft prove prophets"

INTRODUCTION

I. THE LIFE OF TENNYSON

THE life of Tennyson is, in a peculiar sense, the life of a poet. Chaucer was a man of affairs, Shakespeare was a player, even Milton held the post of Cromwell's Latin secretary ; but Tennyson, from first to last, was a poet and all a poet. His life falls naturally into three periods, — the promise of the poet, the poet's struggle, and the poet's attainment.

The Period of Promise. 1809-1830

Alfred Tennyson was born in the rectory of Somersby, Lincolnshire, August 6, 1809. This lavish year also gave to the world Darwin, Gladstone, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Poe, and Lincoln. With the first two of these Tennyson's life was to come into direct connexion, and from Poe, whom he pronounced "the most original American genius," he received tributes of enthusiastic praise.

Tennyson's county, Lincolnshire, has an ancient history written on the face of the land in British camps, Roman arches, Saxon towers, and mediæval churches of the rarest beauty. The Danes have left their mark on the nomenclature. To the sleepy little market-town of

Boston, with its far-seen steeple, "the Boston Stump," our own New England tradition harks back. The shire won a bad name, in the day of the Tudors, through the faithful friendship that the people showed to their old neighbours of the monasteries. When Henry VIII, ordering England to become Protestant, suppressed the religious houses, it was Lincolnshire that, touched by the plight of the homeless monks, rose in rebellion. The royal punishment was swift and cruel, and the king, in his wrath, characterized the county as "one of the most brute and beestalie of the whole realm." Lincolnshire has been generally regarded, too, with its reaches of fen and marsh and its low chalk hills, the wolds, as peculiarly devoid of the picturesque in scenery; but Tennyson's poetry, reflecting the quiet charm of that "land of reeds," has lent grace, as well as fame, to the county of his birth.

The low white rectory in which the poet grew to manhood held a singularly interesting family. The rector, the Reverend George Clayton Tennyson, was a disinherited son, for whose noble physique and fine intellectual powers the dull little village of Somersby, with its three-score rustic inhabitants, made a strange setting. His was a restless spirit, described in after years by his son Charles as "daily racked by bitter fancies, and tossed about by strong troubles," but he found comfort in the exceeding gentleness and serenity of his wife, and occupation in the teaching of his children. George, the first-born, had died in babyhood, but seven sons and four daughters came after, so that the rectory garden rang unceasingly with

the music of child voices. The three seniors of this romping troop were Frederick, Charles, and Alfred, who all in later years won public recognition as poets. The artistic impulse seems to have come from their father, himself a poet, although he did not publish his verse. His love of beauty made the rectory fit to be "a nest of nightingales." He built the Gothic dining room with stained-glass windows through which the sunshine made, as Charles would say, "butterfly souls" on the wall, and he carved with his own hand an ornamental chimney-piece out of the stone of the district.

As this group of blithe, imaginative children, with only twelve years intervening between Frederick and the baby Horatio, played at Arthurian tournaments and other doughty games in "the parson's field," or entertained one another with original romances by the evening fire-light, the pre-eminence of Alfred's genius was not at once apparent. The few incidents of his childhood that have been handed down are perhaps no more remarkable than what the mother could have told of his brothers and sisters, but none the less they show that the boy was a poet from the cradle. Before he could read he would, on a gusty day, spread his arms to the air and let himself be blown onward by the blast, crying out a line of his own making :

"I hear a voice that's speaking in the wind."

He had hardly acquired the art of penmanship when Charles put a slate into his hand, one Sunday morning,

and bade him try to write a poem about the flowers in the garden. By the time his sagacious elder brother, Alfred's senior by one year, returned from church, the little poet on trial had the slate covered over with crooked lines of blank verse after the fashion of Thomson's *Seasons*, the only poetry he had yet encountered. "Yes, you can write," said Charles, after a judicial reading, and Tennyson forthwith accepted his vocation. From that day on he was a student of poetry and a persistent, delighted worker in his art. He took to reading Campbell, Byron, and Scott, but he deemed, at eight, that he had surpassed them all in the sonorous verse :

"With slaughterous sons of thunder rolled the flood."

Dr. Tennyson sent his sons, in turn, to the grammar school at Louth, a neighbouring market-town, dominated by one of the finest spires in England. Louth was Mrs. Tennyson's native place, and Alfred, like his brothers, had a home with his grandmother. "How I did hate that school!" he remarked in later years. "The only good I ever got from it was the memory of the words, '*sonus desilientis aquæ*,' and of an old wall covered with wild weeds opposite the school windows. I wrote an English poem there, for one of the Jacksons; the only line I recollect is

"'While bleeding heroes lie along the shore.'"

Before he was twelve Alfred's regular schooling had ceased. He returned to Somersby rectory, where Dr. Tennyson, with the help of a visiting tutor, fitted him for

the university. But his chief study still was poetry, pursued under masters of his own election. At ten or eleven he had composed hundreds of lines in the metre of Pope's *Iliad*. At twelve, taking Scott for model, he achieved a romantic epic of six thousand verses, full of battles and of the mountain scenery that the Lincolnshire boy had never looked upon. Of this performance Tennyson afterward said: "I never felt myself so truly inspired. I wrote as much as seventy lines at one time, and used to go shouting them about the fields in the dark." At fourteen he wrote a blank verse drama, and it was at fourteen, too, that he experienced a shock of genuine calamity in hearing of Byron's death. He rushed out of doors and, in a lonely place, shouted to the skies and carved on the sandstone the momentous words, "*Byron is dead!*"

In such poetic pursuits and emotions he had the warm sympathy of his two elder brothers, while the father watched the development of his sons with keen appreciation, sometimes making excellent metrical suggestions in regard to the verses that they brought him. It is said that when Alfred was yet in his early teens, Dr. Tennyson prophesied his greatness. The Jacksons, too, those publishers and booksellers of Louth who had taken an interest in the lads during their school years, carried faith in them to the extent of bringing out a volume of their verses. This appeared in March of 1827, under the title *Poems by Two Brothers*, for, although Frederick made four contributions, he was content to leave the venture as a whole

to his juniors. The eldest son and a youth of brilliant parts, he had been sent to Eton, where he had risen to be captain of the school and was, in this very year, passing up to Cambridge. Yet the eager group that waited on the Louth road, watching for the first glimpse of the carrier coming over Tetford Hill with the precious packet of proofs, numbered three ; for Mrs. Tennyson, a delicate little lady in her donkey chair, was there beside her two tall, dark, foreign-looking boys, no less happy and proud than they.

Poems by Two Brothers is not so significant as the first publication of a great poet has often been. It is difficult to distinguish between the contributions of Charles and those of Alfred, though the latter are, as a rule, more vivid in colour and more varied in verse. The book is marked by an amusing display of learning and a still more amusing tone of remorseful melancholy. The mottoes prefixed to the poems and the grave illustrative notes were evidently in large part derived from the boy-thumbed rectory copies of Virgil, Cicero, Horace, Juvenal, Pliny, Tacitus, Suetonius, Ovid, Terence, Lucretius, Sallust. The pages bristle, not with Latin only, but with French, Spanish, and Gaelic. The themes, in a number of instances, are drawn from Roman history, and, indeed, the range of classic reading and sincerity of classic interest shown by the young Tennysons, who prepared this volume between the ages of fifteen and eighteen, might well put a modern school-boy on his mettle. Both in quotations and in cadences the poems lean upon Pope,

Moore, Scott, Byron, and Gray ; but while the lines have little suggestion of that distinctive Tennysonian music which was soon to become so precious a possession of English literature, the book truly foretells the new poet in one respect. Already we find Tennyson's enthusiasm for science and an effort to bring even its latest discoveries into the realm of poetry.

The Jacksons paid the boys twenty pounds, partly in books from the shop and partly in cash. The young poets, in their first flush of wealth, hired a carriage and, by way of celebration, drove fourteen miles over wold and marsh to Mablethorpe, where the sea, as they may have recited from their own volume, shines in far reach beneath

“the living light

And trembles with his million waves magnificently bright.”

Early in the following year (February, 1828) Charles and Alfred were matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge. Frederick had been there a year already and had distinguished himself by winning the university medal for the best Greek ode on the Pyramids. Charles and Alfred, however, achieved their honours through English. In 1829 Charles gained a scholarship by the beauty of his classical translations, and Alfred, urged to the competition by his father, won the chancellor's gold medal for the best English poem on the assigned theme, “Timbuctoo.”

These gifted young Tennysons were, at first, shy and reserved in the university life. Frederick was so sensitive

by nature that, in the Somersby days, Alfred once heartened him for starting out to a dinner-party by the words, "Fred, think of Herschel's great star patches, and you will soon get over all that." Nevertheless, the Cambridge tradition goes that Charles and Alfred, fresh from the little Lincolnshire village, more than once turned back from the door of Trinity dining hall and went away hungry rather than face the fire of curious eyes. They all shrank from the noisy revelry of the place — what Alfred described in a home letter as "the shouts of drunken Gown and drunken Town" — and Alfred found the mathematical studies, the peculiar pride of Cambridge, so dry that he would read his Virgil under the desk during the lectures. He expressed what is not an infrequent disappointment of ardent young students with the technicalities of college instruction in the following sonnet to his university :

"Therefore your halls, your ancient colleges,
Your portals statued with old kings and queens,
Your gardens, myriad-volumed libraries,
Wax-lighted chapels, and rich carven screens,
Your doctors, and your proctors, and your deans,
Shall not avail you, when the Day-beam sports
New-risen o'er awaken'd Albion. No !
Nor yet your solemn organ-pipes that blow
Melodious thunders thro' your vacant courts
At noon and eve, because your manner sorts
Not with this age wherefrom ye stand apart,
Because the lips of little children preach
Against you, you that do profess to teach
And teach us nothing, feeding not the heart."

It was as an undergraduate, too, that Tennyson wrote :

“ Would I could pile fresh life on life, and dull
The sharp desire of knowledge still with knowing !
Art, Science, Nature, everything is full,
As my own soul is full to overflowing.”

That thirst for experience, for wisdom, for fullness of being, with which the formal lectures of the university failed to make connexion, was stimulated in Tennyson by the youthful friendships that Cambridge soon afforded him in most liberal measure. In “those dawn-golden times,” as he afterwards called them, there was a debating club at the university dubbed “The Apostles,” because its members in residence were limited to twelve. It seems to have acted as a magnet for youths destined to distinction. Of its membership in Tennyson’s day were a future master of Trinity, a future dean of Lincoln, a future dean of Ely, a future dean of Canterbury, a future archbishop of Dublin, besides several men now of literary note, who drew more closely to Tennyson than the rest. James Spedding, biographer of Bacon, and Richard Monckton Milnes (afterwards Lord Houghton), biographer of Keats, were among his closest friends, but chief of all was Arthur Henry Hallam, son of the eminent historian and himself a poet. The Apostles early welcomed Tennyson to their coterie, and to some few of them he may have shown an incomplete narrative poem, *The Lover’s Tale*, written in his nineteenth year. In this the real quality of his genius first became apparent, nor was *Timbuctoo*, also an attempt in blank verse, unworthy,

for all its youthful imperfections, of the future Laureate. Tennyson's high-hearted friend, Hallam, who, like Milnes, stood among the defeated competitors, wrote to Gladstone concerning it: "The splendid imaginative power that pervades it will be seen through all hindrances. I consider Tennyson as promising fair to be the greatest poet of our generation, perhaps of our country."

The Period of Struggle. 1830-1850

It was a beautiful beginning to have gained for his genius the faith of these few rare-minded fellow-students, but to win recognition from the British public was, as Tennyson soon found, no such ready matter. In 1830, while still an undergraduate, he published a volume of about fifty brevities under the title *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*. Although half of these are discarded from Tennyson's collected works, some of the remaining stand among his best-known lyrics, as *The Poet*, *The Dying Swan*, *A Dirge*. There is a delicate charm throughout this slender volume, which opens up a youthful dreamland, "where Claribel low-lieth," a dreamland sweet with wandering melodies, peopled by sea-fairies, mermen and mermaids, and by dainty phantom forms, "airy, fairy Lilian," "ever varying Madeline," "faintly smiling Adeline," Mariana, Oriana, "revered Isabel." Such poems as *Recollections of the Arabian Nights* attested a luxuriance of fancy and finish of workmanship which might well have justified high prophecy, while others were in

that vein of spiritual speculation which was to reach onward and upward to *In Memoriam*.

Hallam, who had been deterred by his father's disapproval from publishing his own poems in a joint volume with Tennyson, came forward with eager loyalty to review his friend's book in *The Englishman's Magazine*. There was a favourable notice in *The Westminster Review*, too, and Leigh Hunt, ever a fosterer of young poets, printed a series of critiques in *The Tatler*, — critiques that considered not only *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*, but a volume of sonnets by Charles Tennyson, for the two brothers still kept pace. Leigh Hunt decided that Alfred was the more promising of the two, but Coleridge, on the other hand, seems to have taken greater interest in the work of Charles. The *Quarterly* and *Blackwood's* were still, however, the Gog and Magog of English criticism, and the latter of these, in May, 1832, trampled Tennyson's first lyrical blossoms under foot. It was Christopher North that found some (not all) of these poems "dismal drivel," deriding at the same time the "supernatural pomposity" of Hallam's review.

Nothing daunted, though undoubtedly stung, Tennyson issued another volume, *Poems*, toward the close of 1832. His life during the interval had embraced an adventurous summer journey (1830) to the Pyrenees with Arthur Hallam, in the cause of the Spanish revolutionists. His Cambridge career had been abruptly terminated in February, 1831, by the illness of his father, who summoned Alfred, rather than either of the elder brothers,

to come to the aid of Mrs. Tennyson in this home emergency. He had little time for regretful thoughts of the Trinity group, even of their visit from Wordsworth, whose attention had been called to what he found "a respectable show" of budding poets at Cambridge, for Dr. Tennyson died in March. The new incumbent allowed the Tennysons to live on a few years longer in the Somersby rectory, where the family care devolved upon Alfred.

The eldest son, "the quaint creature Fred," as one of his sisters styled him, had developed, during his later Cambridge course, a tendency to melancholy idleness. He took his B.A. degree in 1832, and then drifted about the south of Europe until he married an Italian lady and settled for twenty years in Florence, where he indulged his taste for music and won the warm friendship of the Brownings. With the exception of a single book in 1854, he kept the poems which he wrote from time to time by him in manuscript until his old age, when he issued, between 1890 and 1895, three volumes. The themes are largely Greek, the tone is noble, and the poetic atmosphere lucid and serene. Frederick Tennyson ultimately returned to England, living six years longer than his famous brother, whose boyish promise had seemed no brighter than his own.

Charles, also, gained his degree in 1832, and presently took holy orders. He married, inherited property from an uncle, and passed a tranquil life as vicar of Grasby, Lincolnshire. He wrote many sonnets, some of exquisite

quality, and made a few poetic translations, publishing three volumes of his verse between the ages of fifty-six and sixty-five. He died thirteen years before the Laureate.

Of the three brothers, Alfred Tennyson alone held unflinchingly to the poet's vocation. Hallam wrote proudly, toward the close of 1832: "Alfred has resisted all attempts to force him into a profession, preferring poetry and an honourable poverty." *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* had brought the author only eleven pounds, but he had, like his brothers and sisters, a small patrimony, and youth is the time of courage. Fitzgerald remembered the young Tennyson as "a sort of Hyperion" in look, and a Cambridge friend, Brookfield, admiring his exploit in lifting and carrying a pet pony on the Somersby lawn, laughingly said it was not fair that he "should be Hercules as well as Apollo." In this splendour of young manhood, Tennyson awaited the reception of his 1832 volume.

The book contained only thirty poems, but among them were *A Dream of Fair Women*, *The Two Voices*, *The Lady of Shalott*, *Ænone*, *The Lotos-Eaters*, *The May Queen*, *The Palace of Art*. This time it was the *Quarterly* that did execution, — the *Quarterly* that an old Lincolnshire squire assured Tennyson was "the next book to God's Bible." The *Quarterly* review, probably written by Lockhart, appeared in July, 1833. It was sarcastic in tone, far more cruel in its mock admiration than the rough attack of "Crusty Christopher," and it took all Hallam's faith and cheer to keep the poet in heart. It

was in August, the month after the date of the *Quarterly* review, that Tennyson went to London to say good-bye to his friend, who, constitutionally delicate and just then somewhat run down from an attack of influenza, was starting with his father on a journey in search of health. It was a merry meeting and the last. Arthur Hallam died suddenly at Vienna, September 15. It was not until October that the word reached Somersby, and not until the following January that "those whose eyes must long be dim with tears," as wrote the father, laid the body to rest in Clevedon Church, beside the Bristol Channel.

Hallam was not only supremely dear to Tennyson, but he was the accepted lover of Tennyson's sister Emily. With the utter grief of these two the entire family, who had grown to know and love Hallam well during his vacation visits, deeply sympathized, and a cloud of sorrow brooded long above the rectory. Tennyson was too stunned at first to care even for his "poor flower of poesy," which had been so rudely scoffed at by the two great voices of British criticism.

"But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,
I go to plant it on his tomb,
That if it can it there may bloom,
Or dying, there at least may die."

For the next ten years the poet courted the shadow rather than the light. At first he hid himself away in his native hamlet, where, as he loitered along between the

blossomed hedges of a Lincolnshire lane at five o'clock one morning, his pain found utterance in the tender cadences of *Break, Break, Break*. But in 1837 the Tennysons had to vacate the rectory.

"Our father's dust is left alone."

They chose to settle near London, at High Beech, where Tennyson gradually renewed old friendships and formed new. Fitzgerald wrote in the spring of the following year :

"We have had Alfred Tennyson here ; very droll, and very wayward ; and much sitting up of nights till two and three in the morning with pipes in our mouths ; at which good hour we would get Alfred to give us some of his magic music, which he does between growling and smoking."

Tennyson was gradually coming to know the foremost Englishmen of his time, Gladstone, Carlyle, Thackeray, Dickens, John Stuart Mill, and others. His fame as a poet was quietly spreading, even to America, where, as early as 1838, there was talk of reprinting the 1830 and 1832 volumes. But these ten years of silence, although his "darkened ways" still "rang with music," were, in the main, years of sore discouragement. He was so hampered by lack of money that he had sold, before leaving Somersby, his Timbuctoo medal. In 1839 he wrote from High Beech : "I have been at this place all the year, with nothing but that muddy pond in prospect and these two little sharp-barking dogs. Perhaps I am coming

to the Lincolnshire coast, but I scarcely know. The journey is so expensive and I am so poor."

This letter was written to Emily Sellwood, whom Tennyson had first met, in 1830, a girl of seventeen, walking in the Fairy Wood at Somersby. A youth of twenty-one, he had accosted her with the unconventional greeting, "Are you a Dryad or an Oread wandering here?" Six years later, his brother Charles married her younger sister, and the poet besought the "happy bridesmaid" to "make a happy bride." Her father, a Lincolnshire lawyer of old family, married to a sister of Sir John Franklin, would not consent to an engagement, but correspondence was permitted for a few years. In 1840, however, since there was still no prospect that the poet could support a wife, even the exchange of letters was forbidden.

From the loss of Hallam, too, Tennyson had not recovered.

"With weary steps I loiter on,
 Tho' always under alter'd skies
 The purple from the distance dies,
 My prospect and horizon gone."

* * * *

"Beneath all fancied hopes and fears
 Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,
 Whose muffled motions blindly drown
 The bases of my life in tears."

* * * *

"Ah, dear, but come thou back to me:
 Whatever change the years have wrought,
 I find not yet one lonely thought
 That cries against my wish for thee."

The marriage of Tennyson's sister Cecilia, in 1842, to a friend of Cambridge days, Edmund Law Lushington, professor of Greek at Glasgow, was an event that brought a certain consolation to the poet.

“Nor have I felt so much of bliss
Since first he told me that he loved
A daughter of our house; nor proved
Since that dark day a day like this.”

Homesick for the country, Tennyson had by that time removed with his mother and sisters thirty or forty miles to the south of London, settling first at a watering-place, Tunbridge Wells, and then at Boxley, near Maidstone, the county town of Kent. This last home was hard by Park House, the seat of the Lushingtons, where, in 1842, Tennyson, “grave and silent,” was often seen among the guests.

In the summer of that year he published his poems, old and new, in two volumes. The first was made up from the issues of 1830 and 1832. Profiting by the criticisms that had been so harshly given, Tennyson had selected and most heedfully revised the best of his early work. The second volume consisted of new poems, including the *Morte d'Arthur*, *Sir Galahad*, *St. Simeon Stylites*, and *Ulysses*. All England read and acknowledged a great poet. Here was the true Tennyson diction, words “cull'd with choicest art.” Here was the rich Tennyson music and the Tennyson flush of colour. Here was, what Hallam had noted at the outset, Tennyson's “strange earnestness” in the “worship of beauty.”

Carlyle, who had styled the earlier lyrics "lollipops," now wrote in a tone of genuine enthusiasm: "The sunniest glow of Life dwells in that soul, chequered duly with dark streaks from night and Hades: everywhere one feels as if all were fill'd with yellow glowing sunlight, some glorious golden Vapour; from which form after form bodies itself; naturally, *golden* forms. In one word, there seems to be a note of 'The Eternal Melodies' in this man; for which let all other men be thankful and joyful!"

Other voices of noble tone spoke roundly out in praise of the new poet, the reviewers became respectful, and a new edition of the two volumes was called for in 1843. Yet Carlyle's word portrait of Tennyson, in a letter to Emerson of date 1844, shows that the shadow was not yet lifted from the poet's heart:

"Moxon informs me that Tennyson is now in town and means to come and see me. Of this latter result I shall be very glad. Alfred is one of the few British and Foreign Figures (a not increasing number, I think!) who are and remain beautiful to me—a true human soul, or some authentic approximation thereto, to whom your own soul can say, Brother! However, I doubt he will not come; he often skips me, in these brief visits to Town; skips everybody, indeed; being a man solitary and sad, as certain men are, dwelling in an element of gloom—carrying a bit of Chaos about him, in short, which he is manufacturing into Cosmos. . . . One of the finest-looking men in the world. A great shock of

rough, dusty-dark hair; bright, laughing, hazel eyes; massive aquiline face, most massive yet most delicate; of sallow-brown complexion, almost Indian-looking; clothes cynically loose, free-and-easy; smokes infinite tobacco. . . . I do not meet, in these late decades, such company over a pipe! We shall see what he will grow to."

Tennyson had added reason for gravity just then. He had been induced to invest his little patrimony in a wood-carving scheme, whose failure fairly made him ill. The prospect of marriage was fainter than ever. But his old friend, Milnes, bestirred himself, at Carlyle's urgency, on Tennyson's behalf, and secured for him, through Sir Robert Peel, in 1845, a pension from the crown of two hundred pounds a year. In this year Wordsworth made mention of Tennyson as "the first of our living poets," and a third edition of the *Poems* was issued, followed by a fourth in 1846. In 1847 came *The Princess*, and early in 1850 *In Memoriam*, the long-projected elegy for Arthur Hallam. This year, in which Tennyson gave to the world the slow-ripened fruit of his great sorrow, brought him the crowning happiness and the crowning honour of his life. A moderate income from his poetry being now assured, he married, in June, the bride for whom he had served twice seven years, a woman, so wrote Allingham to Hawthorne, "wise, tender, and of perfect temper." "The peace of God," Tennyson afterward said, "came into my life before the altar when I wedded her." Their first journey together was to Arthur Hallam's grave in Clevedon Church. *In Memoriam*, meanwhile, was win-

ning many hearts, among them that of Prince Albert, and in November Tennyson was invited to succeed Wordsworth, who had died the April before, in the office of Poet Laureate.

The Period of Attainment. 1850-1892

There is no story, we might almost say, of Tennyson's later years. Stories are of the race, not of the goal. His domestic joy was assured, two sons were growing up beside him, wealth and honours increased, his poetic power was vigorous to the last, and more and more, as years went by, the Laureate was folded in by a white light of fame, such as few poets in their own lives have known. Soon after marriage, he had chosen Farringford, an "ivied home among the pine-trees," on a beautiful bay in the Isle of Wight, for his lifelong residence. When the throngs of tourists began to disturb his seclusion, he built himself a summer retreat, Aldworth, on the summit of a Surrey hill. "The second home," wrote Aubrey de Vere, "was as well chosen as the first. It lifted England's great poet to a height from which he could gaze on a large portion of that English land which he loved so well, see it basking in its most affluent summer beauty, and only bounded by 'the inviolate sea.' Year after year he trod its two stately terraces with men the most noted of their time, statesmen, warriors, men of letters, science, and art, some of royal race, some famous in far lands, but none more welcome to him than the friends of his youth."

A man of many studies, Tennyson would talk science with Darwin, theology with Maurice and Stanley, statecraft with Gladstone, the classics with Jowett, while to appreciative listeners he loved to read his poems,

“mouthing out his hollow oes and aes,
Deep-chested music.”

In 1855 he published *Maud*, a lyrical love-drama of great beauty. It was received with some disappointment by the public, but remained a prime favourite with its author. Mrs. Browning wrote to a friend in October of that year :—

“One of the pleasantest things which has happened to us here is the coming down on us of the Laureate, who, being in London for three or four days from the Isle of Wight, spent two of them with us, dined with us, smoked with us, opened his heart to us (and the second bottle of port), and ended by reading *Maud* through from end to end, and going away at half-past two in the morning. If I had had a heart to spare, certainly he would have won mine. He is captivating with his frankness, confidence, and unexampled naïveté ! Think of his stopping in *Maud* every now and then—‘There’s a wonderful touch ! That’s very tender ! How beautiful that is !’ Yes, and it *was* wonderful, tender, beautiful, and he read exquisitely in a voice like an organ, rather music than speech.”

The first four *Idylls of the King*, which were increased to twelve before the cycle was complete, came out in

1859, and met with an enthusiastic welcome. Thackeray wrote: "Gold and purple and diamonds, I say, gentlemen and glory and love and honour, and if you haven't given me all these why should I be in such an ardour of gratitude? But I have had out of that dear book the greatest delight that has ever come to me since I was a young man."

In 1864 Tennyson printed *Enoch Arden*, in which are combined his charm as a poet of the sea and his sympathy as a poet of the people. In 1875 appeared *Queen Mary*, the first of his three great dramas of English history. *Harold* followed in 1876, and *Becket* in 1884. Meanwhile he had published several plays of less importance and, in 1880, a volume of spirited ballads, including *Rizpah*, *The Revenge*, and *The Defence of Lucknow*. This volume renewed the popular acclaim. Tennyson's hold on the English-reading world, indeed, was so strong even to the end that his book of 1889, *Demeter and Other Poems*, sold twenty thousand copies in the first week after publication. This volume was dedicated to the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava in a poem which commemorates the one deep sorrow of Tennyson's later life, the death of his younger son, Lionel, who, during a tour with Lord Dufferin in India, caught jungle fever and died on the homeward voyage.

As Poet Laureate, Tennyson's allegiance to the queen was peculiarly sincere. After his first visit to Osborne, he wrote:

“ Dear and Honoured Lady,
My Queen,

. . . I will not say that ‘ I am loyal,’ or that ‘ Your Majesty is gracious,’ for these are old hackneyed terms used or abused by every courtier, but I will say that during our conversation I felt the touch of that true friendship which binds human beings together, whether they be kings or cobblers.”

The queen, in return, was warmly appreciative of her poet, and desired to confer on him some signal distinction. He declined the offer of a baronetcy in 1873 and again in 1874, but consented, in 1884, partly in the interests of literature, to accept a peerage. As Alfred Lord Tennyson he was no less what Phillips Brooks had found him in 1883, “ gentle and reverent and tender and hopeful.” His poet’s life was closed October 6, 1892, by a poet’s death. “ Nothing could have been more striking,” said the medical bulletin, “ than the scene during the last few hours. On the bed a figure of breathing marble, flooded and bathed in the light of the full moon streaming through the oriel window ; his hand clasping the Shakespeare which he had asked for but recently, and which he had kept by him to the end.”

Tennyson’s dust reposes in the Poets’ Corner of Westminster Abbey, beside that of Robert Browning. Too noble for jealousy, the two chief poets of the Victorian Age had been friends in life, and it is fitting that they should thus rest side by side in England’s temple of fame.

II. THE PRINCESS

Early in 1846 two London rumours relative to Alfred Tennyson were expressed by Elizabeth Barrett in a letter to Robert Browning: "But the really bad news is of poor Tennyson—I forgot to tell you—I forget everything. He is seriously ill with an internal complaint and confined to his bed, as George heard from a common friend. Which does not prevent his writing a new poem,—he has finished the second book of it,—and it is in blank verse and a fairy tale, and called the 'University,' the University members being all females. If George has not diluted the scheme of it with some law from the Inner Temple, I don't know what to think—it makes me open my eyes. Now isn't the world too old and fond of steam, for blank verse poems, in ever so many books, to be written on the fairies? I hope they may cure him, for the best deed they can do. He is not precisely in danger, understand,—but the complaint may *run* into danger,—so the account went."

The reality, fortunately, is seldom as bad as the rumour. Tennyson was indeed a sick man, undergoing such a thorough course of hydropathy that, said Fitzgerald, in resentment of the poet's unsocial moods, he wrote "the names of his friends in water"; but he made a happy recovery, and the characters of his new poem turned out to be, if a little less than human, yet something more than elfin.

Tennyson's fancy had been playing about the theme of

a woman's college for at least seven years. "He talked over the plan of the poem," states the present Lord Tennyson, "with my mother in 1839." In the summer of 1845 he showed the first section, all that was then ready, to his friend Edmund Lushington. The second part, according to Miss Barrett's information, was finished by the following January. He pursued his task diligently throughout the year, though in unromantic surroundings. "The Princess," says Mrs. Ritchie, "with all her lovely court and glowing harmonies was born in London, among the fogs and smuts of Lincoln's Inn."

The poem was published by Moxon in 1847. "My book is out, and I hate it, and so no doubt will you," Tennyson wrote to Fitzgerald, who more than fulfilled the poet's expectation. "I am considered a great heretic," this candid friend afterward observed in reference to Tennyson, "because like Carlyle I gave up all hopes of him after *The Princess*." Mrs. Browning, in a letter to her confidante, Miss Mitford, betrayed a touch of feminine displeasure: "At last we have caught sight of Tennyson's *Princess*, and I may or must profess to be a good deal disappointed. What woman will tell the great poet that Mary Wollstonecraft herself never dreamt of setting up collegiate states, proctordoms, and the rest, which is a worn-out plaything in the hands of one sex already, and need not be *transferred* in order to be proved ridiculous?"

Though the critical verdict was unfavourable, the poem, even on Fitzgerald's admission, was "well liked" by

readers in general, so that a second edition, with a few verbal alterations and a dedication to Henry Lushington, appeared in 1848. But Tennyson evidently felt that *The Princess* had fallen short of its aim, for in a third edition, 1850, he introduced the six connecting songs, rewrote in part both Prologue and Conclusion, and thoroughly revised the entire text. His object in adding the songs, whose beauty is their own excuse for being, was avowedly to show the public — slow of understanding as publics are — that the child was “the heroine of the piece.” The fourth edition, 1851, attempted by the introduction of the “weird seizures” to do something for the character of the Prince — just what, it is not easy to determine. The explanation proposed in the *Memoirs* concerning the Prince, that his “too emotional temperament was intended from an artistic point of view to emphasize his comparative want of power,” tempts the reflection that his “want of power” needed no emphasis, since it is this, indeed, more than any other one element in the poem, that imperils the consistency and dignity of the whole action.

“We needs must love the highest when we see it”

is a law of the heart that finds no application here. The poor Princess, on pain of universal masculine condemnation, must needs love this Prince or any prince who chooses to upset her university and demand her life.

There was yet a fifth edition, 1853, which inserted fifteen new lines in the Prologue. Herewith the text was

finally established. This must have been a relief to the publisher, for Tennyson would subject the poem to such continual and close revision, even while it was passing through the press, that Moxon regarded him, says Miss Mitford, as "a great torment, keeping proofs a fortnight to alter, and then sending for revises."

In all, according to Wace, about one hundred and seventy lines of blank verse and six lyrics had been added to the poem since its first publication.

Even so, the poet was not altogether content with his work. Mr. Locker-Lampson reports, among words dropped by the Laureate on a Continental journey in 1869: "He talked of *The Princess* with something of regret, of its fine blank verse, and the many good things in it, 'but,' said he, 'though truly original, it is, after all, only a medley.'"

As a medley, then, let us regard it, not too seriously, nor at all inflexibly. Tennyson's own words toward the close of the Prologue deprecate criticism on the anachronisms and consequent inconsistencies and unrealities of the tale. Different countries, different civilizations, different centuries play in and out of the poem with the fantastic coherence of a dream. But *The Princess* is a medley in a deeper sense than this, — a blend of jest and earnest, of delicate satire and solemn exhortation. "You have seen," wrote Tennyson to Dawson, on receipt of his *Study of the Princess*, "that if women ever were to play such freaks, the burlesque and the tragic might go hand in hand."

Under such conditions as these, we could hardly expect to find the story in itself convincing. The Princess, a girl of twenty, has founded her very charming university, stored "full of rich memorial," in the twinkling of an eye. Who were her own instructors, and when did she, in the midst of studies mathematical, astronomical, geological, musical, and poetical, find time to sift the annals of womankind for a Corinna, Diotima, Tomyris, for Miriam, Jael, Judith, Hortensia, and the rest? And how had art had time to commemorate their glories for her in statues and frescoes, in satin weft and jewelled brooch and "great bronze valves"? Where did she find her artists, and where, above all, her "violet-hooded Doctors"? Not in the "bookless wilds" of the northern kingdom, surely, although Cyril comments on Psyche's lecture in the tone of an Oxford graduate. And while the Princess has been filling her teens with this achievement extraordinary, what has the Prince been doing? Taking part in court pageants, having weird seizures, dreaming of love. This youth of the long yellow ringlets, who well-nigh faints at the sight of his tall Princess playing with her leopards, has strength enough to rescue her from the rushing flood—a service for which her gratitude seems disproportionate in view of the fact that it was through his own "pranks of saucy boyhood" that she fell in—yet apparently one woman proctor, and that a "puff'd pursuer," suffices to hale him before the judgment seat. As for his "claim," if the betrothal in childhood, a "pre-contract" to which the Princess had never

given consent, might at any time have been held as binding on her, surely the Prince forfeited that mediæval hold when both parties agreed to stake the bridal on the issue of the tournament. He was overthrown, but that made no difference whatever in the general masculine assertion of his right.

“Nor did her father cease to press my claim,
Nor did mine own, now reconciled; nor yet
Did those twin brothers, risen again and whole;
Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.”

The shifting lights of the medley may account for such confusions in the narrative, but the characters might reasonably be expected to bear analysis. The minor masculine figures, the two kings, Cyril, Arac, even Florian, are, indeed, sufficiently clear in portraiture. Lady Blanche is made so disagreeable as well as ignoble that her early influence over the Princess becomes discredited. Psyche and Melissa, the “Soul” and “Honey” of this woman world, are as essentially traitorous in their relation toward their leader and their friend as the “three gallant gentlemen” are incapable of applying to their feminine case any masculine standards of loyalty and honour. Their own honour, in fact, was just then at the mercy of the proverb: “All’s fair in love and war.”

With the Princess herself, we must admit that the poet has not fully produced the effect that he intended. On this point, the present Lord Tennyson states: “As for the various characters in the poem, they give all pos-

sible views of woman's higher education ; and as for the heroine herself, the Princess Ida, the poet who created her considered her as one of the noblest among his women. The stronger the man or woman, the more of the lion or lioness untamed, the greater the man or woman tamed. In the end we see this lioness-like woman subduing the elements of her humanity to that which is highest within her, and recognizing the relation in which she stands toward the order of the world and toward God."

We have now come, then, to that aspect of the gossamer romance concerning which the poet was as grave as any preacher — the ideal character and proper sphere of woman. Light as the treatment in the earlier cantos is, he did not intend *The Princess* for a refined comedy on the old theme of *The Taming of the Shrew*, but for a parable, the word that Tennyson himself applied to it, shadowing a sacred truth of life.

Tennyson was not in sympathy with the "woman movement" as it presented itself in the middle years of the last century. The poet Sydney Dobell, loud in lamentation over "the hourly aggregating troop of authoresses, who are the pleasant vices and brilliant misfortunes of recent English literature," hailed *The Princess* as a "noble rebuke" to aspiring womankind. In a letter penned by Dobell in 1861, he speaks of an evening spent at Farringford in the Laureate's company : "We found the glorious old god as godlike as ever. . . . When E. told him, in the morning, that we were going

to bring an authoress, his horror at 'writing women' was grotesque to behold."

How far Tennyson had looked into the projects, past and contemporary, of advanced education for woman does not appear. Various critics, casting about for the "sources" of *The Princess*, have suggested as contributory in greater or less degree Plato's *Republic*, Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Shakespeare's *Love's Labour's Lost*, the Countess of Newcastle's drama of *The Female Academy*, Defoe's *Essay on Projects*, Johnson's *Rasselas*, Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* and *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters*, together with special passages from the writings of Milton, Ascham, Steele, Shelley, and Comte.

It is not necessary to dwell long on these, since the poem can have been but very slightly indebted to any purely literary source. What need of books, when the question was vocal, even to shrillness, in the English air? In *The Republic*, Plato maintained that in the perfect state men and women should follow the same pursuits and, to this end, be given a common education. In the fifth book of the *Faerie Queene*, cantos IV-VII, we read how Radigund the Amazon,

"A princess of great powre and greater pride,"

overcame, by her beauty rather than her prowess, the dazzled Sir Artegall, who, by the tyranny of his conqueror, was forced to spin, clad in woman's garments, among many such captive and humiliated knights.

"Such is the crueltie of womenkynd,
 When they have shaken off the shameful band,
 With which wise nature did them strongly bynd
 T' obey the heasts of mans well-ruling hand."

It is by another "Championess," however, by Britomart that Artégall is avenged and freed ; but she is a scandalized opponent of Woman's Rights and speedily reduces the grateful Amazons to "mens subjection."

Love's Labour's Lost depicts an exclusively masculine Academe. The young king of Navarre and his three favourite nobles vow to study for three years without seeing a woman in all that time. On the very day of the agreement each student becomes a lover, and they unanimously decide : —

"It is religion to be thus forsworn."

It was two hundred years before the day of Tennyson's medley that Margaret Cavendish, Countess of Newcastle, put forth a stiff, undeveloped little play, whose initial situation is that of *The Princess*, — ladies sequestered in a college which gallants strive to invade. This titled authoress was but a timid advocate of emancipation. Very meekly she suggests : "It seems as if there were spirits of the feminine gender, as also the masculine," and very adroitly she tries to recommend her literary labours to men's approval by a housewifely, culinary metaphor. She fears her fruits of poetry "will taste harsh, and unpleasant ; But if they were strew'd with some Sugar of Praises, and Bak'd in the Oven of Applause, they may pass at a generall Feast."

Toward the end of the seventeenth century, Defoe in all earnestness proposed the establishment of a woman's college. Sir Richard Steele was, in England, the chief advocate of woman's education during the earlier part of the eighteenth century. Much has been made, as a source for *The Princess*, of the following passage from the concluding chapter of Johnson's *Rasselas*, published in 1759:—

“The princess thought, that of all sublunary things, knowledge was the best: she desired first to learn all sciences, and then proposed to found a college of learned women, in which she would preside, that, by conversing with the old, and educating the young, she might divide her time between the acquisition and communication of wisdom, and raise up for the next age models of prudence, and patterns of piety.”

By Tennyson's day the French Revolution had set all manner of new social theories afloat, and the conception of a poetic romance centring in a woman's college may easily have arisen in his mind without any aid from libraries. In the generous years of youth he had mused not a little on the denials that surround and cramp the growth of women. Two omitted stanzas from *A Dream of Fair Women* run:—

“In every land I thought that, more or less,
The stronger, sterner nature overbore
The softer, uncontrolled by gentleness
And selfish evermore:

“And whether there were any means whereby,
In some far aftertime, the gentler mind

Might reassume its just and full degree
Of rule among mankind."

In *The Princess* we have depicted, with rich variety of grace and charm, a woman's university. What are its distinguishing features? Beauty of dress, manifest in those academic silks of daffodil and lilac, "zoned with gold"; beauty of abode, a palace of sculptured arches, laurelled porches, columned halls, marble courts sweet with rose and jasmine, and musical with fountains and the "pealing" nightingale; beauty in every appointment and appliance, in sphere-blazoned lamps, silver-voiced clocks, silken couch curtains, purple footcloth, desk of satin-wood; most of all the beauty of symbolic art, of helmed Pallas and crescent-crowned Diana, countless memorials of woman's victory and emblems of woman's aspiration. One commentator avows that no man could lecture well behind a satin-wood desk, but it is not the fault of the desk that Lady Psyche's lecture,

"A bird's-eye view of all the ungracious past,"

runs on with such sweeping fluency. It may be owned, however, that the austerity of science suffers a little in the geology expedition from that picnic feast with its satin pavilion, cushions of "broider'd down," tripod for the fragrant flame, golden service for the dainty viand, bell-mouthed glasses for the amber wine, and even a harp to wing the hour with music.

But that inner intellectual beauty for which lovely forms and gleaming colours were none too rich a raiment is

lacking in this university. If there is any sound scholarship, any genuine quest of truth, any real energy of thought in those "stately theatres," we get no hint of it from the mocking reporter :

"O to hear
The Doctors! O to watch the thirsty plants
Imbibing! once or twice I thought to roar."

Women do not like *The Princess*, say the critics, because women, created without the sense of humour, cannot bear to be laughed at, and Tennyson's gentle banter ruffles their tempers. The banter belongs to the medley and is well enough in its place, but when from bantering premises the poet proceeds to draw a grave conclusion, even a woman's sense of logic may rebel.

Princess Ida, with all her obvious faults of behaviour, represents the woman's yearning for a fuller development, a larger life ; but she is altruistic, not selfish, in her aims. Though even the poet turns against her in the end, he let her explain her position, in the earlier cantos, on a perfectly justifiable basis.

"When we set our hand
To this great work, we purposed with ourself
Never to wed."

"Have we not made ourself the sacrifice? "

"Women . . . fail so far
In high desire, they know not, cannot guess
How much their welfare is a passion to us."

It was fortunate for Princess Ida that she, a woman, had no sense of humour, for otherwise the patronizing

address of the do-nothing Prince on his sick-bed — almost one hundred lines of blank verse from a man in mortal weakness! — his

“Blame not thyself too much . . .”

“Henceforth thou hast a helper, me . . .”

“Approach and fear not,”

might have ended the medley in a subdued ripple of laughter. If only Rosalind had stood in Ida's sandals that one moment!

Now this is not saying that the substance of what the Prince utters in this last canto is other than noble and true. It is only dramatically that it strikes a jarring note. His tone carries with it an assumption of superiority which his deeds have in no respect warranted. But this, cry the critics, is the gist of the whole matter. The Princess does not yield to the Prince for any force of manhood that she finds in him. It is the Child whose baby touches have softened her heart and induced her to accept for herself — what she has never refused for others — the lot of wifehood and of motherhood. The Child, as Tennyson declared, is the heroine. About childhood is built the whole fabric of society. Granted; yet one can but remember, when love is the theme, that little Aglaïa is an imperfect symbol of wedded unity, for the mother of this two-year-old has already forgotten the dead father in the caresses of a frankly mercenary suitor.

One reason why *The Princess* is a good classroom text lies in the great diversity of opinions it calls forth. Lit-

erary quarrels are the pleasantest in the world. The medley is not one of those exalted masterpieces which awe young readers into acquiescence with a half-comprehended praise. Its charm and its problem are both within reach and invite the student to unaffected enjoyment and independent judgement. Best of all, it abounds in many forms of poetic beauty. The old Greek flavour is there. The poem smacks of Homer and Theocritus. It breathes a mellow air of literary reminiscence in general, and the leisurely reader may find pleasure in the balancing of passage against passage. *The Princess* affords, too, if printed, as here; with the more significant variants at hand; a rare opportunity for watching a poet at work. As Tennyson revised his romance from edition to edition, it will be noticed that it was the serious rather than the ironic element on which he was more and more inclined to lay the stress. The similes and metaphors of this poem, though sometimes open to the criticism of elaborating a figure out of all relation to what it was designed to interpret, contain some of Tennyson's most artistic nature touches. The blank verse is a language in itself for the ear attuned to metrical cadences; while the intercalary songs — every one of which should be learned by heart — are, in the words of Dr. van Dyke, "the jewels which are to the poem what the stained-glass windows are to the confused vastness of York Minster, — the light and glory of the structure."

THE PRINCESS: A MEDLEY

PROLOGUE

SIR WALTER VIVIAN all a summer's day
Gave his broad lawns¹ until the set of sun
Up to the people: thither flock'd at noon
His tenants, wife and child, and thither half
The neighbouring borough with their Institute 5
Of which he was the patron. I was there
From college, visiting the son, — the son
A Walter too, — with others of our set,
Five others: we were seven at Vivian-place.

And me that morning Walter show'd the house, 10
Greek, set with busts: from vases in the hall
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than their names,
Grew side by side; and on the pavement lay
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the park,
Huge Ammonites,² and the first bones of time; 15
And on the tables every clime and age
Jumbled together; celts³ and calumets,³
Claymore and snow-shoe, toys in lava, fans

¹ Pasture-lands. Cf. 55.

² Fossil shells.

³ See note.

Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,
Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere, 20
The cursed Malayan crease,¹ and battle-clubs
From the isles of palm : and higher on the walls,
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and deer,
His own forefathers' arms and armour hung.

And 'this,' he said, 'was Hugh's at Agincourt ; 25
And that was old Sir Ralph's at Ascalon :
A good knight he ! we keep a chronicle
With all about him' — which he brought, and I
Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt with knights,
Half-legend, half-historic, counts and kings 30
Who laid about them at their wills and died ;
And mixt with these, a lady, one that arm'd
Her own fair head, and sallying thro' the gate,
Had beat her foes with slaughter from her walls.

'O miracle of women,' said the book, 35
'O noble heart who, being strait-besieged
By this wild king to force her to his wish,
Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a soldier's death,
But now when all was lost or seem'd as lost —
Her stature more than mortal in the burst 40
Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on fire —
Brake with a blast of trumpets from the gate,
And, falling on them like a thunderbolt,

¹ Dagger of serpentine blade.

She trampled some beneath her horses' heels,
And some were whelm'd with missiles of the wall, 45
And some were push'd with lances from the rock,
And part were drown'd within the whirling brook :
O miracle of noble womanhood !'

So sang the gallant glorious chronicle ;
And, I all rapt in this, ' Come out,' he said, 50 .
' To the Abbey : there is Aunt Elizabeth
And sister Lilia with the rest.' We went
(I kept the book and had my finger in it)
Down thro' the park : strange was the sight to me ;
For all the sloping pasture murmur'd, sown 55
With happy faces and with holiday.
There moved the multitude, a thousand heads :
The patient leaders of their Institute
Taught them with facts. One rear'd a font of stone
And drew, from butts of water on the slope, 60
The fountain of the moment, playing, now
A twisted snake, and now a rain of pearls,
Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded ball
Danced like a wisp : and somewhat lower down
A man with knobs and wires and vials fired 65
A cannon : Echo answer'd in her sleep
From hollow fields : and here were telescopes
For azure views ; and there a group of girls
In circle waited, whom the electric shock
Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter : round the lake 70
A little clock-work steamer paddling plied

And shook the lilies : perch'd about the knolls
 A dozen angry models jetted steam :
 A petty railway ran : a fire-balloon
 Rose gem-like up before the dusky groves 75
 And dropt a fairy parachute and past :
 And there thro' twenty posts of telegraph
 They flash'd a saucy message to and fro
 Between the mimic stations ; so that sport
 Went hand in hand with science ; elsewhere 80
 Pure sport : a herd of boys with clamour bowl'd
 And stump'd the wicket ; babies roll'd about
 Like tumbled fruit in grass ; and men and maids
 Arranged a country dance, and flew thro' light
 And shadow, while the twangling violin 85
 Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and overhead
 The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty lime
 Made noise with bees and breeze from end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking of the time ;
 And long we gazed, but satiated at length 90
 Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and ivy-claspt,
 Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,
 'Thro' one wide chasm of time and frost they gave¹
 The park, the crowd, the house ; but all within
 The sward was trim as any garden lawn : 95
 And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,
 And Lilia with the rest, and lady friends
 From neighbour seats² : and there was Ralph himself.

¹ Gave a view of,² Country-houses.

A broken statue propt against the wall,
As gay as any. Lilia, wild with sport, 100
Half child half woman as she was, had wound
A scarf of orange round the stony helm,
And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,
That made the old warrior from his ivied nook
Glow like a sunbeam : near his tomb a feast 105
Shone, silver-set ; about it lay the guests,
And there we join'd them : then the maiden aunt
Took this fair day for text, and from it preach'd
An universal culture for the crowd,
And all things great ; but we, unworthier, told 110
Of college : he had climb'd across the spikes,
And he had squeezed himself betwixt the bars,
And he had breathed the proctor's dogs ; and one
Discuss'd his tutor, rough to common men,
But honeying at the whisper of a lord ; 115
And one the master, as a rogue in grain
Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their heads I saw
The feudal warrior lady-clad ; which brought
My book to mind : and opening this I read 120
Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that rang
With tilt and tourney ; then the tale of her
That drove her foes with slaughter from her walls,
And much I praised her nobleness, and ' Where,'
Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head (she lay 125
Beside him) ' lives there such a woman now ? '

Quick answer'd Lilia ' There are thousands now
 Such women, but convention beats them down :
 It is but bringing up ; no more than that :
 You men have done it : how I hate you all ! 130
 Ah, were I something great ! I wish I were
 Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then,
 That love to keep us children ! O I wish
 That I were some great princess, I would build
 Far off from men a college like a man's. 135
 And I would teach them all that men are taught :
 We are twice as quick ! ' And here she shook aside
 The hand that play'd the patron with her curls.

And one said smiling ' Pretty were the sight
 If our old halls could change their sex, and flaunt 140
 With prudes for proctors, dowagers for deans,
 And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair.
 I think they should not wear our rusty gowns,
 But move as rich as Emperor-moths, or Ralph
 Who shines so in the corner ; yet I fear, 145
 If there were many Lillas in the brood,
 However deep you might embower the nest,
 Some boy would spy it.'

At this upon the sword
 She tapt her tiny silken-sandal'd foot :
 ' That's your light way ; but I would make it death 150
 For any male thing but to peep at us.'

Petulant she spoke, and at herself she laugh'd ;
 A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,

And sweet as English air could make her, she :
But Walter hail'd a score of names upon her, 155
And 'petty Ogress,' and 'ungrateful Puss,'
And swore he long'd at college, only long'd,
All else was well, for she-society.
They boated and they cricketed ; they talk'd
At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics ; 160
They lost their weeks ; they vex'd the souls of deans ;
They rode ; they betted ; made a hundred friends,
And caught the blossom of the flying terms,
But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-place,
The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus he spoke, 165
Part banter, part affection.

‘True,’ she said,

‘We doubt not that. O yes, you miss'd us much.
I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you did.’

She held it out ; and as a parrot turns
Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye, 170
And takes a lady's finger with all care,
And bites it for true heart and not for harm,
So he with Lilia's. Daintily she shriek'd
And wrung it. ‘Doubt my word again !’ he said.
‘Come, listen ! here is proof that you were miss'd : 175
We seven stay'd at Christmas up to read ;
And there we took one tutor as to read :
The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube and square
Were out of season : never man, I think,
So moulder'd in a sinecure as he : 180

For while our cloisters echo'd frosty feet,
 And our long walks were stript as bare as brooms,
 We did but talk you over, pledge you all
 In wassail ; often, like as many girls —
 Sick for the hollies and the yews of home — 185
 As many little trifling Lilies — play'd
 Charades and riddles as at Christmas here,
 And *what's my thought* and *when* and *where* and *how*,
 And often told a tale from mouth to mouth
 As here at Christmas.'

She remember'd that: 190

A pleasant game, she thought : she liked it more
 Than magic music, forfeits, all the rest.
 But these — what kind of tales did men tell men,
 She wonder'd, by themselves ?

A half-disdain

Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her lips : 195
 And Walter nodded at me ; ' *He* began,
 The rest would follow, each in turn : and so
 We forged a sevenfold story. Kind ? what kind ?
 Chimeras,¹ crotchets,² Christmas solecisms,³
 Seven-headed monsters only made to kill 200
 Time by the fire in winter.'

' Kill him now,

The tyrant ! kill him in the summer too,'
 Said Lilia ; ' Why not now ? ' the maiden aunt.

¹ Monsters of the imagination.

² Whimsical fancies.

³ Incongruities.

‘Why not a summer’s as a winter’s tale?

A tale for summer as befits the time,

205

And something it should be to suit the place,

Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,

Grave, solemn!’

Walter warp’d his mouth at this

To something so mock-solemn, that I laugh’d

And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling mirth

210

An echo like a ghostly woodpecker,

Hid in the ruins ; till the maiden aunt

(A little sense of wrong had touch’d her face

With colour) turn’d to me with ‘As you will ;

Heroic if you will, or what you will,

215

Or be yourself your hero if you will.’

‘Take Lilia, then, for heroine,’ clamour’d he,

‘And make her some great Princess, six feet high,

Grand, epic, homicidal ; and be you

The Prince to win her!’

‘Then follow me, the Prince,’ 220

I answer’d, ‘each be hero in his turn !

Seven and yet one, like shadows in a dream. —

Heroic seems our Princess as required —

But something made to suit with time and place,

A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,

225

A talk of college and of ladies’ rights,

A feudal knight in silken masquerade,

And, yonder, shrieks and strange experiments

For which the good Sir Ralph had burnt them all —

This *were* a medley! we should have him¹ back 230
Who told the *Winter's Tale* to do it for us.
No matter : we will say whatever comes.
And let the ladies sing us, if they will.
From time to time, some ballad or a song
To give us breathing-space.'

So I began, 235

And the rest follow'd : and the women sang
Between the rougher voices of the men,
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind :
And here I give the story and the songs.

¹ Shakespeare.

I

A PRINCE I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,
Of temper amorous, as the first of May,
With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a girl,
For on my cradle shone the Northern star.

There lived an ancient legend in our house. 5
Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grandsire burnt
Because he cast no shadow, had foretold,
Dying, that none of all our blood should know
The shadow from the substance, and that one
Should come to fight with shadows and to fall. 10
For so, my mother said, the story ran.
And, truly, waking dreams were, more or less,
An old and strange affection of the house.
Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven knows what :
On a sudden in the midst of men and day, 15
And while I walk'd and talk'd as heretofore,
I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts,
And feel myself the shadow of a dream.
Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-head cane,
And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd 'catalepsy.' 20
My mother pitying made a thousand prayers ;
My mother was as mild as any saint,

Half-canonized by all that look'd on her,
So gracious was her tact and tenderness :
But my good father thought a king a king ; 25
He cared not for the affection of the house ;
He held his sceptre like a pedant's wand
To lash offence, and with long arms and hands
Reach'd out, and pick'd offenders from the mass
For judgement.

Now it chanced that I had been, 30
While life was yet in bud and blade, betroth'd
To one, a neighbouring Princess : she to me
Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf
At eight years old ; and still from time to time
Came murmurs of her beauty from the South, 35
And of her brethren, youths of puissance ;
And still I wore her picture by my heart,
And one dark tress ; and all around them both
Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees about their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I should wed, 40
My father sent ambassadors with furs
And jewels, gifts, to fetch her : these brought back
A present, a great labour of the loom ;
And therewithal an answer vague as wind :
Besides, they saw the King ; he took the gifts ; 45
He said there was a compact ; that was true :
But then she had a will ; was he to blame ?
And maiden fancies ; loved to live alone
Among her women ; certain, would not wed.

That morning in the presence room I stood 50
With Cyril and with Florian, my two friends :
The first, a gentleman of broken means
(His father's fault) but given to starts and bursts
Of revel ; and the last, my other heart,
And almost my half-self, for still we moved 55
Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my father's face
Grow long and troubled like a rising moon,
Inflamed with wrath : he started on his feet,
Tore the King's letter, snow'd it down, and rent 60
The wonder of the loom thro' warp and woof
From skirt to skirt ; and at the last he sware
That he would send a hundred thousand men,
And bring her in a whirlwind : then he chew'd
The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and cook'd his spleen, 65
Communing with his captains of the war.

At last I spoke : ' My father, let me go.
It cannot be but some gross error lies
In this report, this answer of a King,
Whom all men rate as kind and hospitable : 70
Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once seen,
Whate'er my grief to find her less than fame,
May rue the bargain made.' And Florian said :
' I have a sister at the foreign court,
Who moves about the Princess ; she, you know, 75
Who wedded with a nobleman from thence :

He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,
 'The lady of three castles in that land :
 'Thro' her this matter might be sifted clean.'
 And Cyril whisper'd : ' Take me with you too.' 80
 Then laughing ' what, if these weird seizures come
 Upon you in those lands, and no one near
 To point you out the shadow from the truth !
 Take me : I'll serve you better in a strait ;
 I grate on rusty hinges here : ' but ' No ! ' 85
 Roar'd the rough King, ' you shall not : we ourself
 Will crush her pretty maiden fancies dead
 In iron gauntlets : break the council up.'

But when the council broke, I rose and past
 'Thro' the wild woods that hung about the town ; 90
 Found a still place, and pluck'd her likeness out ;
 Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it lying bathed
 In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd trees :
 What were those fancies ? wherefore break her troth ?
 Proud look'd the lips : but while I meditated 95
 A wind arose and rush'd upon the South,
 And shook the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks
 Of the wild woods together ; and a Voice
 Went with it, ' Follow, follow, thou shalt win.'

Then, ere the silver sickle¹ of that month 100
 Became her golden shield, I stole from court
 With Cyril and with Florian, unperceived,

¹ The crescent moon.

Cat-footed thro' the town and hall in dread
 To hear my father's clamour at our backs—
 With Ho! from some bay window shake the night; 105
 But all was quiet: from the bastion'd walls
 Like threaded spiders, one by one, we dropt,
 And flying reach'd the frontier: then we crost
 To a dyer's land; and so by till¹ and grange,¹
 And vines, and blowing becks,² of wilderness, 110
 We gain'd the mother city thick with towers,
 And in the imperial palace found the King.

His name was Gama; crack'd and small his voice,
 But bland the smile that like a wrinkling wind
 On glassy water drove his cheek in lines; 115
 A little dry old man, without a star.
 Not like a King: three days he feasted us,
 And on the fourth I spake of why we came,
 And my betroth'd: 'You do us, Prince,' he said,
 Aking a snowy hand and silver gem, 120
 'All honour. We remember love ourselves
 In our sweet youth: there did a compact pass
 Long summers back: a kind of ceremony—
 I think the year in which our olives fall'd.
 I would you had her, Prince, with all my heart, 125
 With my full heart; but there were widows here,
 Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady Blanche;
 They led her thence, in and out of place
 Maintaining that with equal husbandry

¹ Cultivated land and farm-house.

² Blooming thickets.

The woman were an equal to the man. 130
They harp'd on this ; with this our banquets rang ;
Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots of talk ;
Nothing but this ; my very ears were hot
To hear them : knowledge, so my daughter held,
Was all in all : they had but been, she thought, 135
As children ; they must lose the child, assume
The woman : then, Sir, awful odes she wrote,
Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,
But all she is and does is awful : odes
About this losing of the child : and rhymes 140
And dismal lyrics, prophesying change
Beyond all reason : these the women sang ;
And they that know such things — I sought but peace ;
No critic I — would call them masterpieces :
They master'd *me*. At last she begg'd a boon, 145
A certain summer-palace which I have
Hard by your father's frontier : I said no,
Yet being an easy man, gave it : and there,
All wild to found an University
For maidens, on the spur she fled ; and more 150
We know not, — only this : they see no men,
Not ev'n her brother Arac, nor the twins
Her brethren, tho' they love her, look upon her
As on a kind of paragon ; and I
(Pardon me saying it) were much loath to breed 155
Dispute betwixt myself and mine : but since
(And I confess with right) you think me bound
In some sort, I can give you letters to her ;

And yet, to speak the truth, I rate your chance
Almost at naked nothing.'

Thus the King; 160

And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to slur
With garrulous ease and oily courtesies
Our formal compact, yet, not less (all frets
But chafing me on fire to find my bride)
Went forth again with both my friends. We rode 165
Many a long league back to the North. At last
From hills, that look'd across a land of hope,
We dropt with evening on a rustic town
Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve,
Close at the boundary of the liberties; ¹ 170
There, enter'd an old hostel, called mine host
To council, plied him with his richest wines,
And show'd the late-writ letters of the King.

He with a long low sibilation,² stared
As blank as death in marble; then exclaim'd 175
Averring it was clear against all rules
For any man to go: but as his brain
Began to mellow, 'If the King,' he said,
'Had given us letters, was he bound to speak?
The King would bear him out;' and at the last — 180
The summer of the vine in all his veins —
'No doubt that we might make it worth his while.
She once had past that way; he heard her speak;
She scared him; life! he never saw the like;

¹ The University precincts.

² Whistle.

She look'd as grand as doomsday and as grave : 185
 And he, he revered his liege-lady there ;
 He always made a point to post with mares ;
 His daughter and his housemaid were the boys¹ :
 The land, he understood, for miles about
 Was till'd by women ; all the swine were sows, 190
 And all the dogs, —

But while he jested thus,
 A thought flash'd thro' me which I clothed in act,
 Remembering how we three presented Maid
 Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of feast,
 In mask or pageant at my father's court. 195
 We sent mine host to purchase female gear ;
 He brought it, and himself, a sight to shake
 The midriff of despair with laughter, holp
 To lace us up, till, each, in maiden plumes
 We rustled : him we gave a costly bribe 200
 To guerdon silence, mounted our good steeds,
 And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We follow'd up the river as we rode,
 And rode till midnight when the college lights
 Began to glitter firefly-like in copse 205
 And linden alley : then we past an arch,
 Whereon a woman-statue rose with wings
 From four wing'd horses dark against the stars ;
 And some inscription ran along the front,
 But deep in shadow : further on we gain'd 210

¹ Post-boys.

A little street half garden and half house ;
But scarce could hear each other speak for noise
Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers falling
On silver anvils, and the splash and stir
Of fountains spouted up and showering down 215
In meshes of the jasmine and the rose :
And all about us peal'd the nightingale,
Rapt in her song, and careless of the snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a sign,
By two sphere lamps blazon'd like Heaven and Earth 220
With constellation and with continent,
Above an entry : riding in, we call'd ;
A plump-arm'd ostleress and a stable wench
Came running at the call, and help'd us down.
Then stept a buxom hostess forth, and sail'd, 225
Full-blown, before us into rooms which gave
Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost
In laurel : her we ask'd of that and this,
And who were tutors. ' Lady Blanche,' she said,
' And Lady Psyche.' ' Which was prettiest, 230
Best-natured ? ' ' Lady Psyche.' ' Hers are we,'
One voice, we cried ; and I sat down and wrote,
In such a hand as when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring East ;

' Three ladies of the Northern empire pray 235
Your Highness would enrol them with your own,
As Lady Psyche's pupils.'

This I seal'd :

The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,
And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung.
And raised the blinding bandage from his eyes : 240
I gave the letter to be sent with dawn ;
And then to bed, where half in doze I seem'd
To float about a glimmering night, and watch
A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight, swell
On some dark shore just seen that it was rich. 245

As thro' the land at eve we went,
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O we fell out I know not why,
And kiss'd again with tears.
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears !
For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O there above the little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears.

II

AT break of day the College Portress came :
She brought us Academic silks, in hue
The lilac, with a silken hood to each,
And zoned with gold ; and now when these were on,
And we as rich as moths from dusk cocoons, 5
She, curtseying her obeisance, let us know
The Princess Ida waited : out we paced,
I first, and following thro' the porch that sang
All round with laurel, issued in a court
Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with lengths 10
Of classic frieze, with ample awnings gay
Betwixt the pillars, and with great urns of flowers.

The Muses and the Graces, group'd in threes,
 Enring'd a billowing fountain in the midst;
 And here and there on lattice edges lay 15
 Or book or lute; but hastily we past,
 And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper sat,
 With two tame leopards couch'd beside her throne,
 All beauty compass'd in a female form, 20
 The Princess; liker to the inhabitant
 Of some clear planet close upon the Sun,
 Than our man's earth; such eyes were in her head,
 And so much grace and power, breathing down
 From over her arch'd brows, with every turn 25
 Lived thro' her to the tips of her long hands,
 And to her feet. She rose her height, and said:

'We give you welcome: not without redound¹
 Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,
 The first-fruits of the stranger: aftertime, 30
 And that full voice which circles round the grave,
 Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.
 What! are the ladies of your land so tall?'
 'We of the court,' said Cyril. 'From the court'
 She answer'd, 'then ye know the Prince?' and he: 35
 'The climax of his age! as tho' there were
 One rose in all the world, your Highness that,
 He worships your ideal²:' she replied:

¹ Requit.

² His ideal image of you.

‘ We scarcely thought in our own hall to hear
This barren verbiage, current among men, 40
Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.
Your flight from out your bookless wilds would seem
As arguing love of knowledge and of power ;
Your language proves you still the child. Indeed,
We dream not of him : when we set our hand 45
To this great work, we purposed with ourself
Never to wed. You likewise will do well,
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling
The tricks, which make us toys of men, that so,
Some future time, if so indeed you will, 50
You may with those self-styled our lords ally
Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with scale.’

At those high words, we conscious of ourselves,
Perused the matting ; then an officer
Rose up, and read the statutes, such as these : 55
Not for three years to correspond with home ;
Not for three years to cross the liberties ;
Not for three years to speak with any men ;
And many more, which hastily subscribed,
We enter’d on the boards¹ : and ‘ Now,’ she cried, 60
‘ Ye are green wood, see ye warp not. Look, our hall !
Our statues ! — not of those that men desire,
Sleek Odaliques, or oracles of mode,
Nor stunted squaws of West or East ; but she
That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she 65

¹ Were registered as students.

The foundress of the Babylonian wall,
 The Carian Artemisia strong in war,
 The Rhodope, that built the pyramid,
 Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene
 That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows 70
 Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose
 Convention,¹ since to look on noble forms
 Makes noble thro' the sensuous organism
 That which is higher. O lift your natures up :
 Embrace our aims : work out your freedom. Girls, 75
 Knowledge is now no more a fountain seal'd :
 Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,
 The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite
 And slander, die. Better not be at all
 Than not be noble. Leave us : you may go : 80
 To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue
 The fresh arrivals of the week before ;
 For they press in from all the provinces,
 And fill the hive.'

She spoke, and bowing waved
 Dismissal : back again we crost the court 85
 To Lady Psyche's : as we enter'd in,
 There sat along the forms, like morning doves
 That sun their milky bosoms on the thatch,
 A patient range of pupils ; she herself
 Erect behind a desk of satin-wood, 90
 A quick brunette, well-moulded, falcon-eyed,
 And on the hither side, or so she look'd,

¹ Conventionality.

Of twenty summers. At her left, a child,
 In shining draperies, headed like a star,
 Her maiden babe, a double April old, 95
 Aglaïa slept. We sat: the Lady glanced:
 Then Florian, but no livelier than the dame
 That whisper'd 'Asses' ears' among the sedge,
 'My sister.' 'Comely, too, by all that's fair,'
 Said Cyril. 'O hush, hush!' and she began. 100

'This world was once a fluid haze of light,
 Till toward the centre set the starry tides,
 And eddied into suns, that wheeling cast
 The planets: then the monster, then the man;
 Tattoo'd or woaded,¹ winter-clad in skins, 105
 Raw from the prime, and crushing down his mate;
 As yet we find in barbarous isles, and here
 Among the lowest.'

Thereupon she took
 A bird's-eye-view of all the ungracious past;
 Glanced at the legendary Amazon 110
 As emblematic of a nobler age;
 Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke of those
 That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo;
 Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman lines
 Of empire, and the woman's state in each, 115
 How far from just; till warming with her theme
 She fulminated² out her scorn of laws Salique

¹ Stained with a blue dye derived from the plant woad.

² Thundered.

And little-footed China, touch'd on Mahomet
With much contempt, and came to chivalry :
When some respect, however slight, was paid 120
To woman, superstition all awry :
However, then commenced the dawn : a beam
Had slanted forward, falling in a land
Of promise ; fruit would follow. Deep, indeed,
Their debt of thanks to her who first had dared 125
To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,
Disyoke their necks from custom, and assert
None lordlier than themselves but that which made
Woman and man. She had founded ; they must build.
Here might they learn whatever men were taught : 130
Let them not fear : some said their heads were less :
Some men's were small ; not they the least of men ;
For often fineness compensated size :
Besides the brain was like the hand, and grew
With using ; thence the man's, if more was more ; 135
He took advantage of his strength to be
First in the field : some ages had been lost ;
But woman ripen'd earlier, and her life
Was longer ; and albeit their glorious names
Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since in truth 140
The highest is the measure of the man,
And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,
Nor those horn-handed breakers of the glebe,
But Homer, Plato, Verulam ; even so
With woman : and in arts of government 145
Elizabeth and others ; arts of war

The peasant Joan and others ; arts of grace
 Sappho and others vied with any man :
 And, last not least, she who had left her place,
 And bow'd her state to them, that they might grow 150
 To use and power on this oasis, lapt
 In the arms of leisure, sacred from the blight
 Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last

She rose upon a wind of prophecy
 Dilating on the future ; ' everywhere 155
 Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,
 Two in the tangled business of the world,
 Two in the liberal offices of life,
 Two plummets dropt for one to sound the abyss
 Of science, and the secrets of the mind : 160
 Musician, painter, sculptor, critic, more :
 And everywhere the broad and bounteous Earth
 Should bear a double growth of those rare souls,
 Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood of the world.'

She ended here, and beckon'd us : the rest 165
 Parted¹ ; and, glowing full-faced welcome, she
 Began to address us, and was moving on
 In gratulation, till as when a boat
 Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps, all her voice
 Faltering and fluttering in her throat, she cried 170
 ' My brother ! ' ' Well, my sister.' ' O,' she said,

¹ Departed, as in VI, 202.

'What do you here? and in this dress? and these?
Why who are these? a wolf within the fold!

A pack of wolves! the Lord be gracious to me!

A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all!' 175

'No plot, no plot,' he answer'd. 'Wretched boy,

How saw you not the inscription on the gate,

LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF DEATH?'

'And if I had,' he answer'd, 'who could think

The softer Adams of your Academe, 180

O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were such

As chanted on the blanching bones of men?'

'But you will find it otherwise,' she said.

'You jest: ill jesting with edge-tools! my vow

Binds me to speak, and O that iron will, 185

That axlike edge unturnable, our Head,

The Princess.' 'Well then, Psyche, take my life,

And nail me like a weasel on a grange

For warning: bury me beside the gate,

And cut this epitaph above my bones; 190

Here lies a brother by a sister slain,

All for the common good of womankind.'

'Let me die too,' said Cyril, 'having seen

And heard the Lady Psyche.'

I struck in:

'Albeit so mask'd, Madam, I love the truth; 195

Receive it; and in me behold the Prince

Your countryman, affianced years ago

To the Lady Ida: here, for here she was,

And thus (what other way was left) I came.'

'O Sir, O Prince, I have no country ; none ; 200
 If any, this ; but none. Whate'er I was
 Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.
 Affianced, Sir ? love-whispers may not breathe
 Within this vestal limit, and how should I,
 Who am not mine, say, live : the thunderbolt 205
 Hangs silent ; but prepare : I speak ; it falls.'
 'Yet pause,' I said : 'for that¹ inscription there,
 I think no more of deadly lurks therein,
 Than in a clapper² clapping in a garth,³
 To scare the fowl from fruit : if more there be, 210
 If more and acted on, what follows ? war ;
 Your own work marr'd : for this your Academe,
 Whichever side be victor, in the halloo
 Will topple to the trumpet down, and pass
 With all fair theories only made to gild 215
 A stormless summer.' 'Let the Princess judge
 Of that ' she said : 'farewell, Sir — and to you.
 I shudder at the sequel, but I go.'

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I rejoin'd,
 'The fifth in line from that old Florian, 220
 Yet hangs his portrait in my father's hall
 (The gaunt old baron with his beetle brow
 Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty fights)
 As he bestrode my grandsire, when he fell,
 And all else fled ? we point to it, and we say, 225
 The loyal warmth of Florian is not cold,

¹ As for that. ² A species of noisy scarecrow. ³ Garden.

But branches current¹ yet in kindred veins.'
 'Are you that Psyche,' Florian added; 'she
 With whom I sang about the morning hills,
 Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the purple fly,² 230
 And snared the squirrel of the glen? are you
 That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing brow,
 To smooth my pillow, mix the foaming draught
 Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and read
 My sickness down to happy dreams? are you 235
 That brother-sister Psyche, both in one?
 You were that Psyche, but what are you now?'
 'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said, 'for whom
 I would be that forever which I seem,
 Woman, if I might sit beside your feet, 240
 And glean your scatter'd sapience.'

Then once more,

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I began,
 'That on her bridal morn before she past
 From all her old companions, when the King
 Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that ancient ties 245
 Would still be dear beyond the Southern hills;
 That were there any of our people there
 In want or peril, there was one to hear
 And help them? look! for such are these and I.'
 'Are you that Psyche,' Florian ask'd, 'to whom, 250
 In gentler days, your arrow-wounded fawn
 Came flying while you sat beside the well?
 The creature laid his muzzle on your lap,

¹ Flowing.

² Butterfly.

And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it, and the blood
Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you wept. 255
That was fawn's blood, not brother's, yet you wept.
O by the bright head of my little niece,
You were that Psyche, and what are you now? '
'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said again,
'The mother of the sweetest little maid, 260
That ever crow'd for kisses.'

‘Out upon it!’

She answer'd, ‘peace! and why should I not play
The Spartan mother with emotion, be
The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?
Him you call great: he for the common weal, 265
The fading politics of mortal Rome,
As I might slay this child, if good need were,
Slew both his sons: and I, shall I, on whom
The secular¹ emancipation turns
Of half² this world, be swerved from right to save 270
A prince, a brother? a little will I yield.
Best so, perchance, for us, and well for you.
O hard, when love and duty clash! I fear
My conscience will not count me fleckless; yet —
Hear my conditions: promise (otherwise 275
You perish) as you came, to slip away
To-day, to-morrow, soon: it shall be said,
These women were too barbarous, would not learn;
They fled, who might have shamed us: promise, all.’

¹ Enduring for ages.

² The woman-half.

What could we else, we promised each; and she, 280
Like some wild creature newly-caged, commenced
A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused
By Florian; holding out her lily arms
Took both his hands, and smiling faintly said:
'I knew you at the first: tho' you have grown 285
You scarce have alter'd: I am sad and glad
To see you, Florian. I give thee to death,
My brother! it was duty spoke, not I.
My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.
Our mother, is she well?'

With that she kiss'd 290

His forehead, then, a moment after, clung
About him, and betwixt them blossom'd up
From out a common vein of memory
Sweet household talk, and phrases of the hearth,
And far allusion, till the gracious dews 295
Began to glisten and to fall: and while
They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a voice,
'I brought a message here from Lady Blanche.'
Back started she, and turning round we saw
The Lady Blanche's daughter where she stood, 300
Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,
'That clad her like an April daffodilly
(Her mother's colour) with her lips apart,
And all her thoughts as fair within her eyes, 305
As bottom agates seen to wave and float
In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

So stood that same fair creature at the door.
Then Lady Psyche, 'Ah — Melissa — you!
You heard us?' and Melissa, 'O pardon me 310
I heard, I could not help it, did not wish:
But, dearest Lady, pray you fear me not,
Nor think I bear that heart within my breast,
'To give three gallant gentlemen to death.'
'I trust you,' said the other, 'for we two 315
Were always friends, none closer, elm and vine:
But yet your mother's jealous temperament —
Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse, or prove
The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear
This whole foundation ruin, and I lose 320
My honour, these their lives.' 'Ah, fear me not'
Replied Melissa; 'no — I would not tell,
No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,
No, not to answer, Madam, all those hard things
That Sheba came to ask of Solomon.' 325
'Be it so' the other, 'that we still may lead
The new light up, and culminate in peace,
For Solomon may come to Sheba yet.'
Said Cyril, 'Madam, he the wisest man
Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls 330
Of Lebanonian cedar: nor should you
(Tho', Madam, *you* should answer, *we* would ask)
Less welcome find among us, if you came
Among us, debtors for our lives to you,
Myself for something more.' He said not what, 335
But 'Thanks,' she answer'd 'Go: we have been too long

Together : keep your hoods about the face ;
 They do so that affect abstraction here.

Speak little : mix not with the rest : and hold
 Your promise : all, I trust, may yet be well.'

340

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the child,
 And held her round the knees against his waist,
 And blew the swell'd cheek of a trumpeter,
 While Psyche watch'd them, smiling, and the child
 Push'd her flat hand against his face and laugh'd ; 345
 And thus our conference closed.

And then we stroll'd

For half the day thro' stately theatres
 Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we sat, we heard
 'The grave Professor. On the lecture slate
 The circle rounded under female hands 350
 With flawless demonstration : follow'd then
 A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,
 With scraps of thunderous Epic lilted out
 By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies
 And quoted odes, and jewels five-words long 355
 'That on the stretch'd forefinger of all Time
 Sparkle for ever : then we dipt in all
 'That treats of whatsoever is, the state,
 'The total chronicles of man, the mind,
 'The morals, something of the frame, the rock, 360
 'The star, the bird, the fish, the shell, the flower,
 Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,
 And whatsoever can be taught and known ;

Till like three horses that have broken fence,
And glutted all night long breast-deep in corn, 365
We issued gorged with knowledge, and I spoke
'Why, Sirs, they do all this as well as we.'
'They hunt old trails' said Cyril 'very well;
'But when did woman ever yet invent?'
'Ungracious!' answer'd Florian; 'have you learnt 370
No more from Psyche's lecture, you that talk'd
The trash that made me sick, and almost sad?'
'O trash' he said, 'but with a kernel in it.
Should I not call her wise who made me wise?
And learnt? I learnt more from her in a flash, 375
Than if my brainpan were an empty hull,
And every Muse tumbled a science in.
A thousand hearts lie fallow in these halls,
And round these halls a thousand baby loves
Fly twanging headless arrows at the hearts, 380
Whence follows many a vacant pang; but O
With me, Sir, enter'd in the bigger boy,
The Head of all the golden-shafted firm,
The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche too;
He cleft me thro' the stomacher; and now 385
What think you of it, Florian? do I chase
The substance or the shadow? will it hold?
I have no sorcerer's malison on me,
No ghostly hauntings like his Highness. I
Flatter myself that always everywhere 390
I know the substance when I see it. Well,
Are castles shadows? Three of them? Is she

The sweet proprietress a shadow? If not,
 Shall those three castles patch my tatter'd coat?
 For dear are those three castles to my wants, 395
 And dear is sister Psyche to my heart,
 And two dear things are one of double worth,
 And much I might have said, but that my zone
 Unmann'd me : then the Doctors ! O to hear
 The Doctors ! O to watch the thirsty plants 400
 Imbibing ! once or twice I thought to roar,
 To break my chain, to shake my mane : but thou,
 Modulate me, Soul of mincing mimicry !
 Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my throat ;
 Abase those eyes that ever loved to meet 405
 Star-sisters answering under crescent brows ;
 Abate the stride, which speaks of man, and loose
 A flying charm of blushes o'er this cheek,
 Where they like swallows coming out of time
 Will wonder why they came : but hark the bell 410
 For dinner, let us go ! '

And in we stream'd

Among the columns, pacing staid and still
 By twos and threes, till all from end to end
 With beauties every shade of brown and fair
 In colours gayer than the morning mist, 415
 The long hall glitter'd like a bed of flowers.
 How might a man not wander from his wits
 Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I kept mine own
 Intent on her, who rapt in glorious dreams,
 The second-sight of some Astræan age, 420

Sat compass'd with Professors : they, the while,
Discuss'd a doubt and tossed it to and fro :
A clamour thicken'd, mixt with inmost terms
Of art and science : Lady Blanche alone
Of faded form and haughtiest lineaments, 425
With all her autumn tresses falsely brown,
Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-cat
In act to spring.

At last a solemn grace
Concluded, and we sought the gardens : there
One walk'd reciting by herself, and one 430
In this hand held a volume as to read,
And smoothed a petted peacock down with that ;
Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by,
Or under arches of the marble bridge 434
Hung, shadow'd from the heat : some hid and sought
In the orange thickets : others tost a ball
Above the fountain-jets, and back again
With laughter : others lay about the lawns,
Of the older sort, and murmur'd that their May
Was passing : what was learning unto them ? 440
They wish'd to marry ; they could rule a house ;
Men hated learned women : but we three
Sat muffled like the Fates ; and often came
Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts
Of gentle satire, kin to charity, 445
That harm'd not : then day droopt ; the chapel bells
Call'd us : we left the walks ; we mixt with those
Six hundred maidens clad in purest white,

Before two streams of light from wall to wall,
While the great organ almost burst his pipes, 450
Groaning for power, and rolling thro' the court
A long melodious thunder to the sound
Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies,
The work of Ida, to call down from Heaven
A blessing on her labours for the world. 455

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea !
Over the rolling waters go,
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me ;
While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon ;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon ;
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon :
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

III

MORN in the white wake of the morning star
Came furrowing all the orient into gold.
We rose, and each by other drest with care
Descended to the court that lay three parts
In shadow, but the Muses' heads were touch'd 5
Above the darkness from their native East.

There while we stood beside the fount, and watch'd
Or seem'd to watch the dancing bubble, approach'd

Melissa, tinged with wan from lack of sleep,
 Or grief, and glowing round her dewy eyes 10
 The circled Iris of a night of tears ;
 ' And fly,' she cried, ' O fly, while yet you may !
 My mother knows : ' and when I ask'd her ' how,'
 ' My fault ' she wept ' my fault ! and yet not mine ;
 Yet mine in part. O hear me, pardon me. 15
 My mother, 'tis her wont from night to night
 To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.
 She says the Princess should have been the Head,
 Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms ;
 And so it was agreed when first they came ; 20
 But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,
 And she the left, or not, or seldom used ;
 Hers more than half the students, all the love.
 And so last night she fell to canvass you :
Her countrywomen ! she did not envy her. 25
 " Who ever saw such wild barbarians ?
 Girls ? — more like men ! " and at these words the
 snake,
 My secret, seem'd to stir within my breast ;
 And oh, Sirs, could I help it, but my cheek
 Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye 30
 To fix and make me hotter, till she laugh'd :
 " O marvellously modest maiden, you !
 Men ! girls, like men ! why, if they had been men
 You need not set your thoughts in rubric thus
 For wholesale comment." Pardon, I am shamed 35
 That I must needs repeat for my excuse

What looks so little graceful : “ men ” (for still
My mother went revolving on the word)
“ And so they are, — very like men indeed —
And with that woman closeted for hours ! ” 40
Then came these dreadful words out one by one,
“ Why — these — *are* — men : ” I shudder’d : “ and you
know it.”

“ O ask me nothing,” I said : “ And she knows too,
And she conceals it.” So my mother clutch’d
The truth at once, but with no word from me ; 45
And now thus early risen she goes to inform
The Princess : Lady Psyche will be crush’d ;
But you may yet be saved, and therefore fly :
But heal me with your pardon ere you go.’

‘ What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a blush ? ’ 50
Said Cyril : ‘ Pale one, blush again : than wear
Those lilies, better blush our lives away.
Yet let us breathe for one hour more in Heaven,’
He added, ‘ lest some classic angel speak
In scorn of us, “ They mounted, Ganymedes, 55
To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn.”
But I will melt this marble into wax
To yield us farther furlough : ’ and he went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought
He scarce would prosper. ‘ Tell us,’ Florian ask’d, 60
‘ How grew this feud betwixt the right and left.’
‘ O long ago,’ she said, ‘ betwixt these two

Division smoulders hidden; 'tis my mother,
Too jealous, often fretful as the wind
Pent in a crevice: much I bear with her: 65
I never knew my father, but she says
(God help her) she was wedded to a fool;
And still¹ she rail'd against the state of things.
She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,
And from the Queen's decease she brought her up. 70
But when your sister came she won the heart
Of Ida: they were still together, grew
(For so they said themselves) inosculated²;
Consonant chords that shiver to one note;
One mind in all things: yet my mother still 75
Affirms your Psyche thieved her theories,
And angled with them for her pupil's love:
She calls her plagiarist; I know not what:
But I must go; I dare not tarry, and light,
As flies the shadow of a bird, she fled. 80

Then murmur'd Florian gazing after her,
'An open-hearted maiden, true and pure.
If I could love, why this were she: how pretty
Her blushing was, and how she blush'd again,
As if to close with Cyril's random wish: 85
Not like your Princess cramm'd with erring pride,
Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags in tow.'

¹ Always; the common Elizabethan meaning.

² United. See note.

'The crane,' I said, 'may chatter of the crane,
 The dove may murmur of the dove, but I
 An eagle clang¹ an eagle to the sphere.'² 90
 My Princess, O my Princess! true she errs,
 But in her own grand way: being herself
 Three times more noble than three score of men,
 She sees herself in every woman else,
 And so she wears her error like a crown 95
 To blind the truth and me: for her, and her,
 Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix
 The nectar; but — ah she — whene'er she moves
 The Samian Herè rises and she speaks
 A Memnon smitten with the morning Sun.' 100

So saying from the court we paced, and gain'd
 The terrace ranged along the Northern front,
 And leaning there on those balusters, high
 Above the empurpled champaign, drank the gale
 That blown about the foliage underneath, 105
 And sated with the innumerable rose,
 Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither came
 Cyril, and yawning 'O hard task,' he cried;
 'No fighting shadows here! I forced a way
 Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and gnarl'd. 110
 Better to clear prime forests, heave and thump
 A league of street in summer solstice down,
 Than hammer at this reverend gentlewoman.
 I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd; found her there

¹ Ring out the praises of.

² To the upper air.

At point to move, and settled in her eyes 115
The green malignant light of coming storm.
Sir, I was courteous, every phrase well-oil'd,
As man's could be ; yet maiden-meek I pray'd
Concealment : she demanded who we were,
And why we came ? I fabled nothing fair, 120
But, your example pilot, told her all.
Up went the hush'd amaze of hand and eye.
But when I dwelt upon your old affiance,
She answer'd sharply that I talk'd astray.
I urged the fierce inscription on the gate, 125
And our three lives. True — we had limed ourselves
With open eyes, and we must take the chance.
But such extremes, I told her, well might harm
The woman's cause. " Not more than now," she said,
" So puddled as it is with favouritism." 130
I tried the mother's heart. Shame might befall
Melissa, knowing, saying not she knew :
Her answer was " Leave me to deal with that."
I spoke of war to come and many deaths,
And she replied, her duty was to speak, 135
And duty duty, clear of consequences.
I grew discouraged, Sir ; but since I knew
No rock so hard but that a little wave
May beat admission in a thousand years,
I recommenced ; " Decide not ere you pause. 140
I find you here but in the second place,
Some say the third — the authentic foundress you.
I offer boldly : we will seat you highest :

Wink at our advent : help my Prince to gain
His rightful bride, and here I promise you 145
Some palace in our land, where you shall reign
The head and heart of all our fair she-world,
And your great name flow on with broadening time
For ever." Well, she balanced this a little,
And told me she would answer us to-day, 150
Meantime be mute : thus much, nor more I gain'd.'

He ceasing, came a message from the Head.
'That afternoon the Princess rode to take
The dip of certain strata to the North.
Would we go with her? we should find the land 155
Worth seeing; and the river made a fall
Out yonder : ' then she pointed on to where
A double hill ran up his furrowy forks
Beyond the thick-leaved platans of the vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro' all 160
Its range of duties to the appointed hour.
Then summon'd to the porch we went. She stood
Among her maidens, higher by the head,
Her back against a pillar, her foot on one
Of those tame leopards. Kittenlike he roll'd 165
And paw'd about her sandal. I drew near ;
I gazed. On a sudden my strange seizure came
Upon me, the weird vision of our house :
The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,
Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy, 170

Her college and her maidens, empty masks,
And I myself the shadow of a dream,
For all things were and were not. Yet I felt
My heart beat thick with passion and with awe ;
'Then from my breast the involuntary sigh 175
Brake, as she smote me with the light of eyes
That lent my knee desire to kneel, and shook
My pulses, till to horse we got, and so
Went forth in long retinue following up
The river as it narrow'd to the hills. 180

I rode beside her and to me she said :
'O friend, we trust that you esteem'd us not
Too harsh to your companion yestermorn ;
Unwillingly we spake.' 'No — not to her,'
I answer'd, 'but to one of whom we spake 185
Your Highness might have seem'd the thing you say.'
'Again?' she cried, 'are you ambassadors
From him to me? we give you, being strange,
A license: speak, and let the topic die.'

I stammer'd that I knew him — could have wish'd — 190
'Our King expects — was there no precontract?
There is no truer-hearted — ah, you seem
All he prefigured, and he could not see
The bird of passage flying South but long'd
To follow: surely, if your Highness keep 195
Your purport, you will shock him ev'n to death,
Or baser courses, children of despair.'

‘Poor boy,’ she said, ‘can he not read — no books ?
Quoit, tennis, ball — no games ? nor deals in that
Which men delight in, martial exercise ? 200
To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,
Methinks he seems no better than a girl ;
As girls were once, as we ourself have been :
We had our dreams ; perhaps he mixt with them :
We touch on our dead self, nor shun to do it, 205
Being other — since we learnt our meaning here,
To lift the woman’s fall’n divinity
Upon an even pedestal with man.’

She paused, and added with a haughtier smile
‘And as to precontracts, we move, my friend, 210
At no man’s beck, but know ourself and thee,
O Vashti, noble Vashti ! Summon’d out
She kept her state, and left the drunken King
To brawl at Shushan underneath the palms.’

‘Alas your Highness breathes full East,’ I said, 215
‘On that which leans to you. I know the Prince,
I prize his truth : and then how vast a work
To assail this grey preëminence of man !
You grant me license ; might I use it ? think ;
Ere half be done perchance your life may fail ; 220
Then comes the feebler heiress of your plan,
And takes and ruins all ; and thus your pains
May only make that footprint upon sand
Which old-recurring waves of prejudice

Resmooth to nothing : might I dread that you, 225
 With only Fame for spouse and your great deeds
 For issue, yet may live in vain, and miss,
 Meanwhile, what every woman counts her due,
 Love, children, happiness ? ’

And she exclaim’d,

‘ Peace, you young savage of the Northern wild ! 230
 What ! tho’ your Prince’s love were like a god’s,
 Have we not made ourself the sacrifice ?
 You are bold indeed : we are not talk’d to thus :
 Yet will we say for children, would they grew
 Like field-flowers everywhere ! we like them well : 235
 But children die ; and let me tell you, girl,
 Howe’er you babble, great deeds cannot die ;
 They with the sun and moon renew their light
 For ever, blessing those that look on them.
 Children — that men may pluck them from our hearts, 240
 Kill us with pity, break us with ourselves —
 O — children — there is nothing upon earth
 More miserable than she that has a son
 And sees him err : nor would we work for fame ;
 Tho’ she perhaps might reap the applause of Great, 245
 Who learns the one *rou sto*¹ whence after-hands
 May move the world, tho’ she herself effect
 But little : wherefore up and act, nor shrink
 For fear our solid aim be dissipated
 By frail successors. Would, indeed, we had been, 250
 In lieu of many mortal flies, a race

¹ See note.

Of giants living each a thousand years,
That we might see our own work out, and watch
The sandy footprint harden into stone.'

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in myself 255
If that strange Poet-princess with her grand
Imaginations might at all be won.
And she broke out interpreting my thoughts :

'No doubt we seem a kind of monster to you ;
We are used to that : for women, up till this 260
Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-isle taboo,¹
Dwarfs of the gynæceum,² fail so far
In high desire, they know not, cannot guess
How much their welfare is a passion to us.
If we could give them surer, quicker proof — 265
Oh if our end were less achievable
By slow approaches, than by single act
Of immolation, any phase of death,
We were as prompt to spring against the pikes,
Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it, 270
To compass our dear sisters' liberties.'

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear ;
And up we came to where the river sloped
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black blocks
A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook the woods, 275
And danced the colour, and, below, stuck out

¹ Ban. See note.

² Women's quarters. See note.

The bones of some vast bulk that lived and roar'd
Before man was. She gazed awhile and said,
'As these rude bones to us, are we to her
That will be.' 'Dare we dream of that.' I ask'd, 280
'Which wrought us, as the workman and his work,
That practice betters?' 'How,' she cried, 'you love
The metaphysics! read and earn our prize,
A golden brooch: beneath an emerald plane
Sits Diotima, teaching him¹ that died 285
Of hemlock; our device; wrought to the life;
She rapt upon her subject, he on her:
For there are schools for all.' 'And yet' I said
'Methinks I have not found among them all
One anatomic.' 'Nay, we thought of that,' 290
She answer'd, 'but it pleased us not: in truth
We shudder but to dream our maids should ape
Those monstrous males that carve the living hound,
And cram him with the fragments of the grave,
Or in the dark dissolving human heart, 295
And holy secrets of this microcosm,
Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful jest,
Encarnalize their spirits: yet we know
Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter hangs:
Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty, 300
Nor willing men should come among us, learnt,
For many weary moons before we came,
This craft of healing. Were you sick, ourself
Would tend upon you. To your question now,

¹ Socrates.

Which touches on the workman and his work. 305
Let there be light and there was light: 'tis so ;
For was, and is, and will be, are but is ;
And all creation is one act at once,
The birth of light : but we that are not all,
As parts, can see but parts, now this, now that, 310
And live, perforce, from thought to thought, and make
One act a phantom of succession : thus
Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow, Time ;
But in the shadow will we work, and mould
The woman to the fuller day.'

She spake / 315

With kindled eyes : we rode a league beyond,
And, o'er a bridge of pinewood crossing, came
On flowery levels underneath the crag,
Full of all beauty. 'O how sweet' I said
(For I was half-oblivious of my mask) 320
'To linger here with one that loved us.' 'Yea,'
She answer'd, 'or with fair philosophies
That lift the fancy ; for indeed these fields
Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian lawns,
Where paced the Demigods of old, and saw 325
The soft white vapour streak the crowned towers
Built to the Sun : ' then, turning to her maids,
'Pitch our pavilion here upon the sward ;
Lay out the viands.' At the word, they raised
A tent of satin, elaborately wrought 330
With fair Corinna's triumph ; here she stood,
Engirt with many a florid maiden-cheek,

The woman-conqueror ; woman-conquer'd there
The bearded victor of ten-thousand hymns,
And all the men mourn'd at his side : but we 335
Set forth to climb ; then, climbing, Cyril kept
With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I
With mine affianced. Many a little hand
Glanced like a touch of sunshine on the rocks,
Many a light foot shone like a jewel set 340
In the dark crag : and then we turn'd, we wound
About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,
Hammering and clinking, chattering stony names
Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap and tuff,
Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the Sun 345
Grew broader toward his death and fell, and all
The rosy heights came out above the lawns.

The splendour falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story :
The long light shakes across the lakes,
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O hark, O hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying :
Blow, bugle ; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky,
They faint on hill or field or river :
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying, dying.

IV

‘ THERE sinks the nebulous star we call the Sun,
If that hypothesis of theirs be sound ’
Said Ida ; ‘ let us down and rest ; ’ and we
Down from the lean and wrinkled precipices,
By every coppice-feather’d chasm and cleft,
Dropt thro’ the ambrosial gloom to where below

No bigger than a glow-worm shone the tent
Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she lean'd on me,
Descending ; once or twice she lent her hand,
And blissful palpitations in the blood, 10
Stirring a sudden transport rose and fell.

But when we planted level feet, and dipt
Beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,
There leaning deep in broider'd down we sank
Our elbows : on a tripod in the midst 15
A fragrant flame rose, and before us glow'd
Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine, and gold.

Then she, ' Let some one sing to us : lightlier move
The minutes fledged with music : ' and a maid,
Of those beside her, smote her harp, and sang. 20

' Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more. 25

' Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge ;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more. 30

' Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes

The casement slowly grows a glimmering square ;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more. 35

• Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others : deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret ;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.' 40

She ended with such passion that the tear,
She sang of, shook and fell, an erring pearl
Lost in her bosom : but with some disdain
Answer'd the Princess, ' If indeed there haunt
About the moulder'd lodges of the Past 45
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,
Well needs it we should cram our ears with wool
And so pace by : but thine are fancies hatch'd
In silken-folded idleness ; nor is it
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost, 50
But trim our sails, and let old bygones be,
While down the streams that float us each and all
To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs of ice,
Throne after throne, and molten on the waste
Becomes a cloud : for all things serve their time 55
Toward that great year of equal might and rights,
Nor would I fight with iron laws, in the end
Found golden : let the past be past ; let be
Their cancell'd Babels : tho' the rough kex¹ break
The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-blown goat 60

¹ Hemlock.

Hang on the shaft, and the wild figtree split
Their monstrous idols, care not while we hear
A trumpet in the distance pealing news
Of better, and Hope, a poisoning eagle, burns
Above the unrisen morrow : ' then to me ; 65
' Know you no song of your own land,' she said,
' Not such as moans about the retrospect,
But deals with the other distance and the hues
Of promise ; not a death's-head at the wine.'

Then I remember'd one myself had made, 70
What time I watch'd the swallow winging South
From mine own land, part made long since, and part
Now while I sang, and maidenlike as far
As I could ape their treble, did I sing.

' O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying South, 75
Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

' O tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest each,
That bright and fierce and fickle is the South,
And dark and true and tender is the North. 80

' O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow, and light
Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

' O were I thou that she might take me in,
And lay me on her bosom, and her heart 85
Would rock the snowy cradle till I died.

‘Why lingereth she to clothe her heart with love,
Delaying as the tender ash delays
To clothe herself, when all the woods are green ?

‘O tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is flown : 90
Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,
But in the North long since my nest is made.

‘O tell her, brief is life but love is long,
And brief the sun of summer in the North,
And brief the moon of beauty in the South. 95

‘O Swallow, flying from the golden woods,
Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and make her mine
And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.’

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at each,
Like the Ithacensian suitors in old time, 100
Stared with great eyes, and laugh’d with alien lips,
And knew not what they meant ; for still my voice
Rang false : but smiling ‘Not for thee,’ she said,
‘O Bulbul,¹ any rose of Gulistan
Shall burst her veil : marsh-divers, rather, maid, 105
Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-crake
Grate her harsh kindred in the grass : and this
A mere love-poem ! O for such, my friend,
We hold them slight : they mind us of the time
When we made bricks in Egypt. Knaves are men, 110
That lute and flute fantastic tenderness,
And dress the victim to the offering up,

¹ Thrush. See note.

And paint the gates of Hell with Paradise,
 And play the slave to gain the tyranny.
 Poor soul! I had a maid of honour once; 115
 She wept her true eyes blind for such a one,
 A rogue of canzonets and serenades.
 I loved her. Peace be with her. She is dead.
 So they blaspheme the muse! But great is song
 Used to great ends: ourself have often tried 120
 Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm have dash'd
 The passion of the prophetess; for song
 Is duer unto freedom, force and growth
 Of spirit than to junketing and love.
 Love is it? Would this same mock-love, and this 125
 Mock-Hymen were laid up like winter bats,
 Till all men grew to rate us at our worth,
 Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty babes
 To be dandled, no, but living wills, and sphered
 Whole in ourselves and owed to none. Enough! 130
 But now to leaven play with profit, you,
 Know you no song, the true growth of your soil,
 That gives the manners of your countrywomen?

She spoke and turn'd her sumptuous head with eyes
 Of shining expectation fixt on mine. 135
 Then while I dragg'd my brains for such a song,
 Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd glass had wrought,
 Or master'd by the sense of sport, began
 To troll a careless, careless tavern-catch
 Of Moll and Meg, and strange experiences 140

Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded at him,
I frowning; Psyche flush'd and wann'd and shook;
The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows;
'Forbear,' the Princess cried; 'Forbear, Sir' I;
And heated thro' and thro' with wrath and love, 145
I smote him on the breast; he started up;
'There rose a shriek as of a city sack'd;
Melissa clamour'd 'Flee the death;' 'To horse'
Said Ida; 'home! to horse!' and fled, as flies
A troop of snowy doves athwart the dusk, 150
When some one batters at the dovecote-doors,
Disorderly the women. Alone I stood
With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at heart,
In the pavilion: there like parting hopes
I heard them passing from me: hoof by hoof, 155
And every hoof a knell to my desires,
Clang'd on the bridge; and then another shriek,
'The Head, the Head, the Princess, O the Head!'
For blind with rage she miss'd the plank, and roll'd
In the river. Out I sprang from glow to gloom: 160
There whirl'd her white robe like a blossom'd branch
Rapt to the horrible fall: a glance I gave,
No more; but woman-vested as I was
Plunged; and the flood drew; yet I caught her; then
Oaring one arm, and bearing in my left 165
The weight of all the hopes of half the world,
Strove to buffet to land in vain. A tree
Was half-disrooted from his place and stoop'd
To drench his dark locks in the gurgling wave

Mid-channel. Right on this we drove and caught, 170
And grasping down the boughs I gain'd the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmeringly group'd
In the hollow bank. One reaching forward drew
My burthen from mine arms ; they cried ' She lives ' :
They bore her back into the tent : but I, 175
So much a kind of shame within me wrought,
Not yet endured to meet her opening eyes,
Nor found my friends ; but push'd alone on foot
(For since her horse was lost I left her mine)
Across the woods, and less from Indian craft 180
Than beelike instinct hiveward, found at length
The garden portals. Two great statues, Art
And Science, Caryatids, lifted up
A weight of emblem, and betwixt were valves
Of open-work in which the hunter rued 185
His rash intrusion, manlike, but his brows
Had sprouted, and the branches thereupon
Spread out at top, and grimly spiked the gates.

A little space was left between the horns,
'Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top with pain, 190
Dropt on the sward, and up the linden walks,
And, tost on thoughts that changed from hue to hue,
Now poring on the glow-worm, now the star,
I paced the terrace, till the Bear had wheel'd
'Thro' a great arc his seven slow suns.

A step

195

Of lightest echo, then a loftier form
 Than female, moving thro' the uncertain gloom,
 Disturb'd me with the doubt 'if this were she,'
 But it was Florian. 'Hist O Hist' he said,
 'They seek us : out so late is out of rules. 200
 Moreover "seize the strangers" is the cry.
 How came you here ?' I told him : 'I' said he,
 'Last of the train, a moral leper, I,
 To whom none spake, half-sick at heart, return'd.
 Arriving all confused among the rest 205
 With hooded brows I crept into the hall,
 And, couch'd behind a Judith, underneath
 The head of Holofernes peep'd and saw.
 Girl after girl was call'd to trial : each
 Disclaim'd all knowledge of us : last of all, 210
 Melissa : trust me, Sir, I pitied her.
 She, question'd if she knew us men,¹ at first
 Was silent ; closer prest, denied it not :
 And then, demanded if her mother knew,
 Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied : 215
 From whence the royal mind, familiar with her,
 Easily gather'd either guilt.² She sent
 For Psyche, but she was not there ; she call'd
 For Psyche's child to cast it from the doors ;
 She sent for Blanche to accuse her face to face ; 220
 And I slipt out : but whither will you now ?
 And where are Psyche, Cyril ? both are fled :

¹ Us to be men.² The guilt of both.

What, if together ? that were not so well.
 Would rather we had never come ! I dread
 His wildness, and the chances of the dark.'

225

'And yet,' I said, 'you wrong him more than I
 That struck him : this is proper to¹ the clown,
 Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled, still the clown,
 To harm the thing that trusts him, and to shame
 That which he says he loves : for Cyril, howe'er 230
 He deal in frolic, as to-night — the song
 Might have been worse and sinn'd in grosser lips
 Beyond all pardon — as it is, I hold
 These flashes on the surface are not he.
 He has a solid base of temperament : 235
 But as the waterlily starts and slides
 Upon the level in little puffs of wind,
 'Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is he.'

Scarce had I ceased when from a tamarisk near
 Two proctors leapt upon us, crying, 'Names : ' 240
 He, standing still, was clutch'd ; but I began
 To thrid the musky-circled mazes, wind
 And double in and out the boles, and race
 By all the fountains : fleet I was of foot :
 Before me shower'd the rose in flakes ; behind 245
 I heard the puff'd pursuer ; at mine ear
 Bubbled the nightingale and heeded not,
 And secret laughter tickled all my soul.

¹ Characteristic of.

At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine,
That claspt the feet of a Mnemosyne, 250
And falling on my face was caught and known.

They haled us to the Princess where she sat
High in the hall : above her droop'd a lamp,
And made the single jewel on her brow
Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-head, 255
Prophet of storm : a handmaid on each side
Bow'd toward her, combing out her long black hair
Damp from the river ; and close behind her stood
Eight daughters of the plough, stronger than men, 259
Huge women blowzed¹ with health, and wind, and rain.
And labour. Each was like a Druid rock ;
Or like a spire of land that stands apart
Cleft from the main, and wail'd about with mews.²

Then, as we came, the crowd dividing clove
An advent to the throne : and there beside, 265
Half-naked as if caught at once from bed
And tumbled on the purple footcloth, lay
The lily-shining child ; and on the left,
Bow'd on her palms and folded up from wrong,
Her round white shoulder shaken with her sobs, 270
Melissa knelt ; but Lady Blanche erect
Stood up and spake, an affluent orator.

‘ It was not thus, O Princess, in old days :
You prized my counsel, lived upon my lips :

¹ Ruddy in a coarse way.

² Sea-birds. See note.

I led you then to all the Castalies ; 275
I fed you with the milk of every Muse ;
I loved you like this kneeler, and you me
Your second mother : those were gracious times.
Then came your new friend : you began to change —
I saw it and grieved — to slacken and to cool ; 280
Till taken with her seeming openness
You turn'd your warmer currents all to her,
To me you froze : this was my meed for all.
Yet I bore up in part from ancient love,
And partly that I hoped to win you back, 285
And partly conscious of my own deserts,
And partly that you were my civil head.
And chiefly you were born for something great,
In which I might your fellow-worker be,
When time should serve : and thus a noble scheme 290
Grew up from seed we two long since had sown ;
In us true growth, in her a Jonah's gourd,
Up in one night and due to sudden sun :
We took this palace ; but even from the first
You stood in your own light and darken'd mine. 295
What student came but that you planed ¹ her path
To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,
A foreigner, and I your countrywoman,
I your old friend and tried, she new in all ?
But still her lists were swell'd and mine were lean ; 300
Yet I bore up in hope she would be known :
Then came these wolves : *they* knew her : *they* endured,

¹ Smoothed.

Long-closeted with her the yestermorn,
To tell her what they were, and she to hear :
And me none told : not less to an eye like mine 305
A lidless watcher of the public weal,
Last night, their mask was patent, and my foot
Was to you : but I thought again : I fear'd
To meet a cold " We thank you, we shall hear of it
From Lady Psyche : " you had gone to her, 310
She told, perforce ; and winning easy grace,
No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd among us
In 'our young nursery still unknown, the stem
Less grain than touchwood, while my honest heat
Were all miscounted as malignant haste 315
To push my rival out of place and power.
But public use¹ required she should be known ;
And since my oath was ta'en for public use,
I broke the letter of it to keep the sense.
I spoke not then at first, but watch'd them well, 320
Saw that they kept apart, no mischief done ;
And yet this day (tho' you should hate me for it)
I came to tell you ; found that you had gone,
Ridd'n to the hills, she likewise : now, I thought,
That surely she will speak ; if not, then I : 325
Did she ? These monsters blazon'd what they were,
According to the coarseness of their kind,
For thus I hear ; and known at last (my work)
And full of cowardice and guilty shame,
I grant in her some sense of shame, she flies ; 330

¹ Welfare.

And I remain on whom to wreak your rage,
 I, that have lent my life to build up yours.
 I that have wasted here health, wealth, and time,
 And talent, I — you know it — I will not boast :
 Dismiss me, and I prophesy your plan, 335
 Divorced from my experience, will be chaff
 For every gust of chance, and men will say
 We did not know the real light, but chased
 The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread.'

She ceased: the Princess answer'd coldly, 'Good: 340
 Your oath is broken: we dismiss you: go.
 For this lost lamb (she pointed to the child)
 Our mind is changed: we take it to ourself.'

Thereat the Lady stretch'd a vulture throat,
 And shot from crooked lips a haggard smile. 345
 'The plan was mine. I built the nest' she said
 'To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!' and stoop'd to up-
 drag
 Melissa: she, half on her mother propt,
 Half-drooping from her, turn'd her face, and cast
 A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer, 350
 Which melted Florian's fancy as she hung,
 A Niobëan daughter, one arm out,
 Appealing to the bolts of Heaven: and while
 We gazed upon her came a little stir
 About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd 355
 Among us, out of breath, as one pursued,

A woman-post¹ in flying raiment. Fear
Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her face, and wing'd
Her transit to the throne, whereby she fell
Delivering seal'd dispatches which the Head 360
Took half-amazed, and in her lion's mood
Tore open, silent we with blind surmise
Regarding, while she read, till over brow
And cheek and bosom brake the wrathful bloom
As of some fire against a stormy cloud, 365
When the wild peasant rights himself, the rick
Flames, and his anger reddens in the heavens ;
For anger most it seem'd, while now her breast,
Beaten with some great passion at her heart,
Palpitated, her hand shook, and we heard 370
In the dead hush the papers that she held
Rustle : at once the lost lamb at her feet
Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam ;
The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire ; she crush'd
The scrolls together, made a sudden turn 375
As if to speak, but, utterance failing her,
She whirl'd them on to me, as who should say
' Read,' and I read — two letters — one her sire's.

' Fair daughter, when we sent the Prince your way
We knew not your ungracious laws, which learnt, 380
We, conscious of what temper you are built,
Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but fell
Into his father's hands, who has this night,

¹ Messenger.

You lying close upon his territory,
Slipt round and in the dark invested you, 385
And here he keeps me hostage for his son.'

The second was my father's running thus :
'You have our son : touch not a hair of his head :
Render him up unscathed : give him your hand :
Cleave to your contract : tho' indeed we hear 390
You hold the woman is the better man ;
A rampant heresy, such as if it spread
Would make all women kick against their Lords
'Thro' all the world, and which might well deserve
That we this night should pluck your palace down ; 395
And we will do it, unless you send us back
Our son, on the instant, whole.'

So far I read ;

And then stood up and spoke impetuously.

'O not to pry and peer on your reserve,
But led by golden wishes, and a hope 400
The child of regal compact, did I break
Your precinct ; not a scorner of your sex
But venerator, zealous it should be
All that it might be : hear me, for I bear,
'Tho' man, yet human, whatsoe'er your wrongs, 405
From the flaxen curl to the grey lock a life
Less mine than yours : my nurse would tell me of you ;
I babbled for you, as babies for the moon,
Vague brightness ; when a boy, you stoop'd to me

From all high places, lived in all fair lights, 410
 Came in long breezes rapt from inmost South
 And blown to inmost North ; at eve and dawn
 With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods ;
 The leader wildswan in among the stars .
 Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of glow-worm
 light¹ 415
 The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida. Now,
 Because I would have reach'd you, had you been
 Sphered up with Cassiopëia, or the enthroned
 Persephonè in Hades, now at length,
 Those winters of abeyance all worn out, 420
 A man I came to see you : but, indeed,
 Not in this frequency² can I lend full tongue,
 O noble Ida, to those thoughts that wait
 On you, their centre : let me say but this,
 That many a famous man and woman, town. 425
 And landskip, have I heard of, after seen
 The dwarfs of presage :³ tho' when known, there grew
 Another kind of beauty in detail
 Made them worth knowing ; but in you I found
 My boyish dream involved and dazzled down 430
 And master'd, while that after-beauty makes
 Such head from act to act, from hour to hour,
 Within me, that except you slay me here,
 According to your bitter statute-book,
 I cannot cease to follow you, as they say 435

¹ Phosphorescent light.² Throng. A Miltonic use.³ Less than expectation.

The seal does music ; who desire you more
 Than growing boys their manhood : dying lips,
 With many thousand matters left to do,
 The breath of life ; O more than poor men wealth,
 Than sick men health — yours, yours, not mine — but
 half 440

Without you ; with you, whole ; and of those halves
 You worthiest ; and howe'er you block and bar
 Your heart with system out from mine, I hold
 That it becomes no man to nurse despair,
 But in the teeth of clench'd antagonisms 445
 To follow up the worthiest till he die :
 Yet that I came not all unauthorized
 Behold your father's letter.'

On one knee

Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught, and dash'd
 Unopen'd at her feet : a tide of fierce 450
 Invective seem'd to wait behind her lips,
 As waits a river level with the dam
 Ready to burst and flood the world with foam :
 And so she would have spoken, but there rose
 A hubbub in the court of half the maids 455
 Gather'd together : from the illumined hall
 Long lanes of splendour slanted o'er a press
 Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded ewes,
 And rainbow robes, and gems and gemlike eyes,
 And gold and golden heads ; they to and fro 460
 Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red, some pale,
 All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the light,

Some crying there was an army in the land,
And some that men were in the very walls,
And some they cared not ; till a clamour grew 465
As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,
And worse-confounded : high above them stood
The placid marble Muses, looking peace.

Not peace she look'd, the Head : but rising up
Robed in the long night of her deep hair, so 470
To the open window moved, remaining there
Fixt like a beacon-tower above the waves
Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling eye
Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the light
Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd her arms and
call'd 475
Across the tumult and the tumult fell.

‘ What fear ye, brawlers ? am not I your Head ?
On me, me, me, the storm first breaks : / dare
All these male thunderbolts : what is it ye fear ?
Peace ! there are those to avenge us and they come : 480
If not, — myself were like enough, O girls,
To unfurl the maiden banner of our rights,
And clad in iron burst the ranks of war,
Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,
Die : yet I blame you not so much for fear ; 485
Six thousand years of fear have made you that
From which I would redeem you : but for those
That stir this hubbub — you and you — I know

Your faces there in the crowd — to-morrow morn
 We hold a great convention : then shall they 490
 That love their voices more than duty, learn
 With whom they deal, dismiss'd in shame to live
 No wiser than their mothers, household stuff,
 Live chattels, mincers of each other's fame,
 Full of weak poison, turnspits for the clown, 495
 The drunkard's football, laughing-stocks of Time,
 Whose brains are in their hands and in their heels,
 But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to thrum,
 To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and to scour,
 For ever slaves at home and fools abroad.' 500

She, ending, waved her hands : thereat the crowd
 Muttering, dissolved : then with a smile, that look'd
 A stroke of cruel sunshine on the cliff,
 When all the glens are drown'd in azure gloom
 Of thunder-shower, she floated to us and said : 505

' You have done well and like a gentleman,
 And like a prince : you have our thanks for all :
 And you look well too in your woman's dress :
 Well have you done and like a gentleman.
 You saved our life : we owe you bitter thanks : 510
 Better have died and spilt our bones in the flood —
 Then men had said — but now — What hinders me
 To take such bloody vengeance on you both ? —
 Yet since our father — Wasps in our good hive,
 You would-be quenchers of the light to be, 515

Barbarians, grosser than your native bears —
O would I had his sceptre for one hour !
You that have dared to break our bound, and gull'd
Our servants, wrong'd and lied and thwarted us —
I wed with thee ! I bound by precontract 520
Your bride, your bonds slave ! not tho' all the gold
That veins the world were pack'd to make your crown,
And every spoken tongue should lord you. Sir,
Your falsehood and yourself are hateful to us :
I trample on your offers and on you : 525
Begone : we will not look upon you more.
Here, push them out at gates.'

In wrath she spake.

Then those eight mighty daughters of the plough
Bent their broad faces toward us and address'd
Their motion : twice I sought to plead my cause, 530
But on my shoulder hung their heavy hands,
The weight of destiny : so from her face
They push'd us, down the steps, and thro' the court,
And with grim laughter thrust us out at gates.

We cross'd the street and gain'd a petty mound 535
Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and heard
The voices murmuring. While I listen'd, came
On a sudden the weird seizure and the doubt :
I seem'd to move among a world of ghosts ;
The Princess with her monstrous woman-guard, 540
The jest and earnest working side by side,
The cataract and the tumult and the kings

Were shadows; and the long fantastic night
 With all its doings had and had not been,
 And all things were and were not.

This went by 545

As strangely as it came, and on my spirits
 Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy :
 Not long ; I shook it off : for spite of doubts
 And sudden ghostly shadowings I was one
 To whom the touch of all mischance but came 550
 As night to him that sitting on a hill
 Sees the midsummer, midnight, Norway sun
 Set into sunrise ; then we moved away.

INTERLUDE

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,
 That beat to battle where he stands ;
 Thy face across his fancy comes,
 And gives the battle to his hands :
 A moment, while the trumpets blow, 5
 He sees his brood about thy knee ;
 The next, like fire he meets the foe,
 And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang : we thought her half-possess'd,
 She struck such warbling fury thro' the words ; 10
 And, after, feigning pique at what she call'd
 The raillery, or grotesque, or false sublime —
 Like one that wishes at a dance to change
 The music — clapt her hands and cried for war,
 Or some grand fight to kill and make an end : 15

And he that next inherited the tale
Half turning to the broken statue, said,
' Sir Ralph has got your colours ; if I prove
Your knight, and fight your battle, what for me ?'
It chanced, her empty glove upon the tomb 20
Lay by her like a model of her hand.
She took it and she flung it. ' Fight,' she said,
' And make us all we would be, great and good.'
He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,
A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the hall, 25
Arranged the favour, and assumed the Prince.

V

Now, scarce three paces measured from the mound,
 We stumbled on a stationary voice,¹
 And 'Stand, who goes?' 'Two from the palace' I.
 'The second two: they wait,' he said, 'pass on;
 His Highness wakes:' and one, that clash'd in arms, 5
 By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas led
 Threading the soldier-city, till we heard
 The drowsy folds of our great ensign shake
 From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial tent
 Whispers of war.

Entering, the sudden light 10

Dazed me half-blind: I stood and seem'd to hear,
 As in a poplar grove when a light wind wakes
 A lisping of the innumerable leaf and dies,
 Each hissing in his neighbour's ear; and then
 A strangled titter, out of which there brake 15
 On all sides, clamouring etiquette to death,
 Unmeasured mirth; while now the two old Kings
 Began to wag their baldness up and down,
 The fresh young captains flash'd their glittering teeth,
 The huge bush-bearded barons heaved and blew, 20
 And slain with laughter roll'd the gilded squire.

¹ The voice of one stationed on guard, the sentinel.

At length my sire, his rough cheek wet with tears,
 Panted from weary sides ' King, you are free !
 We did but keep you surety for our son,
 If this be he, — or a draggled mawkin,¹ thou, 25
 That tends her bristled grunterns in the sludge : '
 For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn with briers,
 More crumpled than a poppy from the sheath,
 And all one rag, disprinc'd from head to heel.
 Then some one sent beneath his vaulted palm 30
 A whisper'd jest to some one near him, ' Look,
 He has been among his shadows.' ' Satan take
 The old women and their shadows ! (thus the King
 Roar'd) make yourself a man to fight with men.
 Go : Cyril told us all.'

As boys that slink 35

From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,
 Away we stole, and transient² in a trice
 From what was left of faded woman-slough³
 To sheathing splendours and the golden scale
 Of harness, issued in the sun, that now 40
 Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the Earth,
 And hit the Northern hills. Here Cyril met us
 A little shy at first, but by and by
 We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd and given
 For stroke and song, resolder'd peace, whereon 45
 Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled away
 Thro' the dark land, and later in the night

¹ Servant girl. See note. ² Passing. The exact Latin use.

³ Woman-dress.

Had come on Psyche weeping : ' then we fell
 Into your father's hand, and there she lies,
 But will not speak, nor stir.'

He show'd a tent 50

A stone-shot off : we enter'd in, and there
 Among piled arms and rough accoutrements,
 Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's cloak,
 Like some sweet sculpture draped from head to foot,
 And push'd by rude hands from its pedestal, 55
 All her fair length upon the ground she lay :
 And at her head a follower of the camp,
 A charr'd and wrinkled piece of womanhood,
 Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and ' Come ' he whisper'd to her, 60
 ' Lift up your head, sweet sister : lie not thus.
 What have you done but right ? you could not slay
 Me, nor your Prince : look up : be comforted :
 Sweet is it to have done the thing one ought,
 When fall'n in darker ways.' And likewise I : 65
 ' Be comforted : have I not lost her too,
 In whose least act abides the nameless charm
 That none has else for me ? ' She heard, she moved,
 She moan'd, a folded voice ; and up she sat,
 And raised the cloak from brows as pale and smooth 70
 As those that mourn half-shrouded over death
 In deathless marble. ' Her,' she said, ' my friend —
 Parted from her — betray'd her cause and mine —
 Where shall I breathe ? why kept ye not your faith ?

O base and bad ! what comfort ? none for me ! ' 75
To whom remorseful Cyril, ' Yet I pray
Take comfort : live, dear lady, for your child !'
At which she lifted up her voice and cried.

' Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah, my child,
My one sweet child, whom I shall see no more ! 80
For now will cruel Ida keep her back ;
And either she will die from want of care,
Or sicken with ill-usage, when they say
The child is hers — for every little fault,
The child is hers ; and they will beat my girl 85
Remembering her mother : O my flower !
Or they will take her, they will make her hard,
And she will pass me by in after-life
With some cold reverence ¹ worse than were she dead.
Ill mother that I was to leave her there, 90
To lag behind, scared by the cry they made,
The horror of the shame among them all :
But I will go and sit beside the doors,
And make a wild petition night and day,
Until they hate to hear me like a wind 95
Wailing for ever, till they open to me,
And lay my little blossom at my feet,
My babe, my sweet Aglaïa, my one child :
And I will take her up and go my way,
And satisfy my soul with kissing her : 100
Ah ! what might that man not deserve of me

¹ Curtsey.

Who gave me back my child ? ' ' Be comforted,'
 Said Cyril, ' You shall have it : ' but again
 She veil'd her brows, and prone she sank, and so
 Like tender things that being caught feign death, 105
 Spoke not, nor stirr'd.

By this¹ a murmur ran
 Thro' all the camp and inward raced the scouts
 With rumour of Prince Arac hard at hand.
 We left her by the woman, and without
 Found the grey Kings at parle : and ' Look you ' cried 110
 My father ' that our compact be fulfill'd :
 You have spoilt this child ; she laughs at you and man :
 She wrongs herself, her sex, and me, and him :
 But red-faced war has rods of steel and fire ;
 She yields, or war.'

Then Gama turn'd to me : 115
 ' We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy time
 With our strange girl : and yet they say that still
 You love her. Give us, then, your mind at large :²
 How say you, war or not ? '

' Not war, if possible,
 O King,' I said, ' lest from the abuse of war, 120
 The desecrated shrine, the trampled year,³
 The smouldering homestead, and the household flower
 Torn from the lintel — all the common wrong —
 A smoke go up thro' which I loom to her
 Three times a monster : now she lightens scorn 125

¹ By this time.

² Freely.

³ Harvest, which is the fruitage and consummation of the year.

At him that mars her plan, but then would hate
(And every voice she talk'd with ratify it,
And every face she look'd on justify it)
The general foe. More soluble is this knot,
By gentleness than war. I want her love. 130
What were I nigher this altho' we dash'd
Your cities into shards with catapults,
She would not love ; — or brought her chain'd, a slave,
The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord,
Not ever would she love ; but brooding turn 135
The book of scorn, till all my flitting chance
Were caught within the record of her wrongs,
And crush'd to death : and rather, Sire, than this
I would the old god of war himself were dead,
Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills, 140
Rotting on some wild shore with ribs of wreck,
Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd in ice,
Not to be molten out.'

And roughly spake
My father, ' Tut, you know them not, the girls.
Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think 145
That idiot legend credible. Look you, Sir !
Man is the hunter ; woman is his game :
The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,
We hunt them for the beauty of their skins ;
They love us for it, and we ride them down. 150
Wheedling and siding with them ! Out ! for shame !
Boy, there's no rose that's half so dear to them
As he that does the thing they dare not do,

Breathing and sounding beauteous battle, comes
 With the air of the trumpet round him, and leaps in 155
 Among the women, snares them by the score
 Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho' dash'd with death
 He reddens what he kisses: thus I won
 Your mother, a good mother, a good wife,
 Worth winning; but this firebrand — gentleness 160
 To such as her! if Cyril spake her true,
 To catch a dragon in a cherry net,
 To trip a tigress with a gossamer,
 Were wisdom to it.'

'Yea but Sire,' I cried,
 'Wild natures need wise curbs. The soldier? No:
 What dares not Ida do that she should prize 166
 The soldier? I beheld her, when she rose
 The yesternight, and storming in extremes,
 Stood for her cause, and flung defiance down
 Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd the death, 170
 No, not the soldier's: yet I hold her, King,
 True woman: but you clash them all in one,
 That have as many differences as we.
 The violet varies from the lily as far
 As oak from elm: one loves the soldier, one 175
 The silken priest of peace, one this, one that,
 And some unworthily; their sinless faith,
 A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,
 Glorifying clown and satyr; whence they need
 More breadth of culture: is not Ida right? 180
 They worth it? truer to the law within?

Severer in the logic of a life?

Twice as magnetic to sweet influences

Of earth and heaven ? and she of whom you speak,

My mother, looks as whole¹ as some serene

185

Creation minted in the golden moods

Of sovereign artists ; not a thought, a touch,

But pure as lines of green that streak the white

Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves ; I say,

Not like the piebald miscellany, man,

190

Bursts of great heart and slips in sensual mire,

But whole and one : and take them all-in-all,

Were we ourselves but half as good, as kind,

As truthful, much that Ida claims as right

Had ne'er been mooted,² but as frankly theirs

195

As dues of Nature. To our point : not war :

Lest I lose all.'

'Nay, nay, you spake but sense'

Said Gama. 'We remember love ourself

In our sweet youth ; we did not rate him then

This red-hot iron to be shaped with blows.

200

You talk almost like Ida : *she* can talk ;

And there is something in it as you say :

But you talk kindlier : we esteem you for it. —

He seems a gracious and a gallant Prince,

I would he had our daughter : for the rest,

205

Our own detention, why, the causes weigh'd,

Fatherly fears — you used us courteously —

We would do much to gratify your Prince —

¹ Perfect.

² Disputed.

We pardon it; and for your ingress here
Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair land, 210
You did but come as goblins in the night,
Nor in the furrow broke the ploughman's head,
Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the milking-maid,
Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of cream :
But let your Prince (our royal word upon it, 215
He comes back safe) ride with us to our lines,
And speak with Arac : Arac's word is thrice
As ours with Ida : something may be done —
I know not what — and ours shall see us friends.
You, likewise, our late guests, if so you will, 220
Follow us : who knows ? we four may build some plan
Foursquare to opposition.'

Here he reach'd

White hands of farewell to my sire, who growl'd
An answer which, half-muffled in his beard,
Let so much out as gave us leave to go. 225

Then rode we with the old King across the lawns
Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings of Spring
In every hole, a song on every spray
Of birds that piped their Valentines, and woke
Desire in me to infuse my tale of love 230
In the old King's ears, who promised help, and oozed
All o'er with honey'd answer as we rode
And blossom-fragrant slipt the heavy dews
Gather'd by night and peace, with each light air
On our mail'd heads : but other thoughts than peace

Burnt in us, when we saw the embattled squares, 236
And squadrons of the Prince, trampling the flowers
With clamour: for among them rose a cry
As if to greet the King; they made a halt;
The horses yell'd; they clash'd their arms; the drum
Beat; merrily-blowing shrill'd the martial fife; 241
And in the blast and bray of the long horn
And serpent-throated bugle, undulated
The banner: anon to meet us lightly pranced
Three captains out; nor ever had I seen 245
Such thews¹ of men: the midmost and the highest
Was Arac: all about his motion clung
The shadow of his sister, as the beam
Of the East, that play'd upon them, made them glance
Like those three stars of the airy Giant's zone, 250
That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark;
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,
And bickers into red and emerald, shone
Their morions,² wash'd with morning, as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I heard 255
War-music, felt the blind wild-beast of force,
Whose home is in the sinews of a man,
Stir in me as to strike: then took the King
His three broad sons; with now a wandering hand
And now a pointed finger, told them all: 260
A common light of smiles at our disguise
Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy jest

¹ Muscle or strength.

² Helmets.

Had labour'd down within his ample lungs,
The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself
Thrice in the saddle, then burst out in words. 265

'Our land invaded, 'sdeath! and he himself
Your captive, yet my father wills not war:
And, 'sdeath! myself, what care I, war or no?
But then this question of your troth remains:
And there's a downright honest meaning in her; 270
She flies too high, she flies too high! and yet
She ask'd but space and fair play for her scheme;
She prest and prest it on me — I myself,
What know I of these things? but, life and soul!
I thought her half-right talking of her wrongs; 275
I say she flies too high, 'sdeath! what of that?
I take her for the flower of womankind,
And so I often told her, right or wrong,
And, Prince, she can be sweet to those she loves,
And, right or wrong, I care not: this is all, 280
I stand upon her side: she made me swear it —
'Sdeath — and with solemn rites by candle-light —
Swear by St. something — I forget her name —
Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest men;
She was a princess too; and so I swore. 285
Come, this is all; she will not: waive your claim:
If not, the foughten field, what else, at once
Decides it, 'sdeath! against my father's will.'

I lagg'd in answer, loath to render up
My precontract, and loath by brainless war 290

To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet ;
 Till one of those two brothers, half aside
 And fingering at the hair about his lip,
 To prick us on to combat ' Like to like !
 The woman's garment hid the woman's heart.' 295
 A taunt that clench'd his purpose like a blow !
 For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,
 And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon the point
 Where idle boys are cowards to their shame,
 ' Decide it here : why not ? we are three to three.' 300

Then spake the third ' But three to three ? no more ?
 No more, and in our noble sister's cause ?
 More, more, for honour : every captain waits
 Hungry for honour, angry for his King.
 More, more, some fifty on a side, that each 305
 May breathe himself, and quick ! by overthrow
 Of these or those, the question settled die.'

' Yea,' answer'd I, ' for this wild wreath of air,
 This flake of rainbow flying on the highest
 Foam of men's deeds — this honour, if ye will. 310
 It needs must be for honour if at all :
 Since, what decision ? if we fail, we fail,
 And if we win, we fail : she would not keep
 Her compact.' ' 'Sdeath ! but we will send to her,'
 Said Arac, ' worthy reasons why she should 315
 Bide by this issue : let our missive¹ thro',
 And you shall have her answer by the word.'²

¹ Either letter or messenger.

² In her very words.

'Boys!' shriek'd the old King, but vainlier than a hen
 To her false daughters in the pool; for none
 Regarded; neither seem'd there more to say: 320
 Back rode we to my father's camp, and found
 He thrice had sent a herald to the gates,
 To learn if Ida yet would cede our claim,
 Or by denial flush¹ her babbling wells
 With her own people's life: three times he went: 325
 The first, he blew and blew, but none appear'd:
 He batter'd at the doors: none came: the next,
 An awful voice within had warn'd him thence:
 The third, and those eight daughters of the plough
 Came sallying thro' the gates, and caught his hair, 330
 And so belabour'd him on rib and cheek
 They made him wild: not less one glance he caught
 Thro' open doors of Ida station'd there
 Unshaken, clinging to her purpose, firm
 Tho' compass'd by two armies and the noise 335
 Of arms; and standing like a stately Pine
 Set in a cataract on an island-crag,
 When storm is on the heights, and right and left
 Suck'd from the dark heart of the long hills roll
 The torrents, dash'd to the vale: and yet her will 340
 Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the King that I was pledged
 To fight in tourney for my bride, he clash'd
 His iron palms² together with a cry;

¹ Fill and redden.

² Gauntlets.

Himself would tilt it out among the lads : 345
But overborne by all his bearded lords
With reasons drawn from age and state, perforce
He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce demur :
And many a bold knight started up in heat,
And sware to combat for my claim till death. 350

All on this side the palace ran the field
Flat to the garden-wall : and likewise here,
Above the garden's glowing blossom-belts,
A column'd entry shone and marble stairs,
And great bronze valves, emboss'd with 'Tomyris 355
And what she did to Cyrus after fight,
But now fast barr'd : so here upon the flat
All that long morn the lists were hammer'd up,
And all that morn the heralds to and fro,
With message and defiance, went and came ; 360
Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,
But shaken here and there, and rolling words
Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read.

' O brother, you have known the pangs we felt,
What heats of indignation when we heard 365
Of those that iron-cramp'd their women's feet ;
Of lands in which at the altar the poor bride
Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift a scourge ;
Of living hearts that crack within the fire 369
Where smoulder their dead despots ; and of those, —
Mothers, — that, all prophetic pity, fling

Their pretty maids in the running flood, and swoops
 The vulture, beak and talon, at the heart
 Made for all noble motion¹ : and I saw
 That equal baseness lived in sleeker times 375
 With smoother men : the old leaven leaven'd all :
 Millions of throats would bawl for civil rights,
 No woman named : therefore I set my face
 Against all men, and lived but for mine own.
 Far off from men I built a fold for them : 380
 I stored it full of rich memorial :
 I fenced it round with gallant institutes,
 And biting laws to scare the beasts of prey
 And prosper'd ; till a rout of saucy boys
 Brake on us at our books, and marr'd our peace, 385
 Mask'd like our maids, blustering I know not what
 Of insolence and love, some pretext held
 Of baby troth, invalid, since my will
 Seal'd not the bond — the striplings ! — for their sport ! —
 I tamed my leopards : shall I not tame these ? 390
 Or you ? or I ? for since you think me touch'd
 In honour — what ! I would not aught of false —
 Is not our cause pure ? and whereas I know
 Your prowess, Arac, and what mother's blood
 You draw from, fight ; you failing, I abide 395
 What end soever : fail you will not. Still
 Take not his life : he risk'd it for my own ;
 His mother lives : yet whatsoe'er you do,
 Fight and fight well ; strike and strike home. O dear

¹ Emotion.

Brothers, the woman's angel guards you, you 400
The sole men to be mingled with our cause,
The sole men we shall prize in the after-time,
Your very armour hallow'd, and your statues
Rear'd, sung to, when, this gad-fly brush'd aside,
We plant a solid foot into the Time, 405
And mould a generation strong to move
With claim on claim from right to right, till she
Whose name is yoked with children's, know herself;
And Knowledge in our own land make her free,
And, ever following those two crowned twins, 410
Commerce and conquest, shower the fiery grain
Of freedom broadcast over all that orbs
Between the Northern and the Southern morn.'

Then came a postscript dash'd across the rest.
' See that there be no traitors in your camp : 415
We seem a nest of traitors — none to trust
Since our arms fail'd — this Egypt-plague of men !
Almost our maids were better at their homes,
Than thus man-girdled here : indeed I think
Our chiefest comfort is the little child 420
Of one unworthy mother ; which she left :
She shall not have it back : the child shall grow
To prize the authentic mother of her mind.
I took it for an hour in mine own bed
This morning : there the tender orphan hands 425
Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm from thence
The wrath I nursed against the world : farewell.'

I ceased ; he said, ' Stubborn, but she may sit
 Upon a king's right hand in thunder storms,
 And breed up warriors ! See now, tho' yourself 430
 Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to sloughs
 That swallow common sense, the spindling King,
 This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.
 When the man wants weight, the woman takes it up,
 And topples down the scales : but this is fixt 435
 As are the roots of earth and base of all ;
 Man for the field and woman for the hearth :
 Man for the sword and for the needle she :
 Man with the head and woman with the heart :
 Man to command and woman to obey ; 440
 All else confusion. Look you ! the grey mare
 Is ill to live with, when her whinny shrills
 From tile to scullery, and her small goodman
 Shrinks in his arm-chair while the fires of Hell
 Mix with his hearth : but you — she's yet a colt — 445
 Take, break her : strongly groom'd and straitly curb'd
 She might not rank with those detestable
 That let the bantling¹ scald at home, and brawl
 Their rights or wrongs like potherbs in the street.
 They say she's comely ; there's the fairer chance : 450
 / like her none the less for rating at her !
 Besides, the woman wed is not as we,
 But suffers change of frame. A lusty brace
 Of twins may weed her of her folly. Boy,
 The bearing and the training of a child 455
 Is woman's wisdom.'

¹ A contemptuous expression for baby.

Thus the hard old King:

I took my leave, for it was nearly noon :
I pored upon her letter which I held,
And on the little clause 'take not his life :'
I mused on that wild morning in the woods, 460
And on the 'Follow, follow, thou shalt win :'
I thought on all the wrathful King had said,
And how the strange betrothment was to end :
Then I remember'd that burnt sorcerer's curse
That one should fight with shadows and should fall : 465
And like a flash the weird affection came :
King, camp and college turn'd to hollow shows ;
I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,
And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,
To dream myself the shadow of a dream : 470
And ere I woke it was the point of noon,
The lists were ready. Empanoplied and plumed
We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there
Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet blared
At the barrier like a wild horn in a land 475
Of echoes, and a moment, and once more
The trumpet, and again : at which the storm
Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge of spears
And riders front to front, until they closed
In conflict with the crash of shivering points, 480
And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream, I dream'd
Of fighting. On his haunches rose the steed,
And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,
And out of stricken helmets sprang the fire.

Part sat like rocks : part reel'd but kept their seats : 485
 Part roll'd on the earth and rose again and drew :
 Part stumbled mixt with floundering horses. Down
 From those two bulks at Arac's side, and down
 From Arac's arm, as from a giant's flail,
 The large blows rain'd, as here and everywhere 490
 He rode the mellay,¹ lord of the ringing lists,
 And all the plain, — brand, mace, and shaft, and shield —
 Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil bang'd
 With hammers : till I thought, can this be he
 From Gama's dwarfish loins ? if this be so, 495
 The mother makes us most — and in my dream
 I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front
 Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies' eyes,
 And highest, among the statues, statuelike,
 Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a Jael, 500
 With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,
 A single band of gold about her hair,
 Like a saint's glory up in heaven : but she
 No saint — inexorable — no tenderness —
 Too hard, too cruel : yet she sees me fight, 505
 Yea, let her see me fall ! with that I drave
 Among the thickest and bore down a Prince,
 And Cyril, one. Yea, let me make my dream
 All that I would. But that large-moulded man,
 His visage all agrin as at a wake,² 510

¹ Confused combat after the ranks are broken. Anglicized from the French *mêlée*.

² A church festival.

Made at me thro' the press, and, staggering back
With stroke on stroke the horse and horseman,¹ came
As comes a pillar of electric cloud,
Flaying the roofs and sucking up the drains,
And shadowing down the champaign till it strikes 515
On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and cracks, and
splits,

And twists the grain with such a roar that Earth
Reels, and the herdsman cry ; for everything
Gave way before him : only Florian, he
That loved me closer than his own right eye, 520
Thrust in between ; but Arac rode him down :
And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the Prince,
With Psyche's colour round his helmet, tough,
Strong, supple, sinew-corded,² apt at arms ;
But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that smote 525
And threw him : last I spurr'd ; I felt my veins
Stretch with fierce heat ; a moment hand to hand,
And sword to sword, and horse to horse we hung,
Till I struck out and shouted ; the blade glanced,
I did but shear a feather, and dream and truth 530
Flow'd from me ; darkness closed me ; and I fell.

¹ His opponents in general.

² Cord-sinewed.

Home they brought her warrior dead :
She nor swoon'd, nor utter'd cry :
All her maidens, watching, said,
‘She must weep or she will die.’

Then they praised him, soft and low,
Call'd him worthy to be loved.
Truest friend and noblest foe ;
Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
Lightly to the warrior stept,
Took the face-cloth from the face ;
Yet she neither moved nor wept.

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
Set his child upon her knee —
Like summer tempest came her tears —
‘Sweet my child, I live for thee.’

VI

My dream had never died or lived again.
As in some mystic middle state I lay ;
Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard :
Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me all
So often that I speak as having seen.

5

For so it seem'd, or so they said to me,
That all things grew more tragic and more strange ;

That when our side was vanquish'd and my cause
For ever lost, there went up a great cry,
The Prince is slain. My father heard and ran 10
In on the lists, and there unlaced my casque
And grovell'd on my body, and after him
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaïa.

But high upon the palace Ida stood
With Psyche's babe in arm : there on the roofs 15
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she sang.

‘Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : the seed,
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a bulk
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side 20
A thousand arms and rushes to the Sun.

‘Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they came ;
The leaves were wet with women's tears : they heard
A noise of songs they would not understand :
They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall, 25
And would have strown it, and are fall'n themselves.

‘Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they came,
The woodmen with their axes : lo the tree !
But we will make it faggots for the hearth,
And shape it plank and beam for roof and floor, 30
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

‘Our enemies have fall'n, have fall'n : they struck ;
With their own blows they hurt themselves, nor knew
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain :
The glittering ax was broken in their arms, 35
Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder blade.

‘Our enemies have fall’n, but this shall grow
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power : and roll’d
With music in the growing breeze of Time,
The tops shall strike from star to star, the fangs
Shall move the stony bases of the world.

40

‘And now, O maids, behold our sanctuary
Is violate, our laws broken : fear we not
To break them more in their behoof, whose arms
Champion’d our cause and won it with a day
Blanch’d in our annals, and perpetual feast,
When dames and heroines of the golden year
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of Spring,
To rain an April of ovation round
Their statues, borne aloft, the three : but come,
We will be liberal, since our rights are won.
Let them not lie in the tents with coarse mankind,
Ill nurses : but descend, and proffer these
The brethren of our blood and cause, that there
Lie bruised and maim’d, the tender ministries
Of female hands and hospitality.’

45

50

55

She spoke, and with the babe yet in her arms,
Descending, burst the great bronze valves, and led
A hundred maids in train across the park.
Some cowl’d, and some bare-headed, on they came,
Their feet in flowers, her loveliest : by them went
The enamour’d air sighing, and on their curls
From the high tree the blossom wavering fell,

60

And over them the tremulous isles of light 65
Slided, they moving under shade: but Blanche
At distance follow'd: so they came: anon
Thro' open field into the lists they wound
Timorously; and as the leader of the herd
That holds a stately fretwork¹ to the Sun, 70
And follow'd up by a hundred airy does,
Steps with a tender foot, light as on air,
The lovely, lordly creature floated on
To where her wounded brethren lay; there stay'd;
Knelt on one knee, — the child on one, — and prest 75
Their hands, and call'd them dear deliverers,
And happy warriors, and immortal names,
And said ' You shall not lie in the tents but here,
And nursed by those for whom you fought, and served
With female hands and hospitality.' 80

Then, whether moved by this, or was it chance,
She past my way. Up started from my side
The old lion, glaring with his whelpless eye,
Silent; but when she saw me lying stark,
Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly pale, 85
Cold even to her, she sigh'd; and when she saw
The haggard father's face and reverend beard
Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the blood
Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of pain
Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead past 90
A shadow, and her hue changed, and she said:

¹ Of antlers.

‘He saved my life : my brother slew him for it.’
No more : at which the King in bitter scorn
Drew from my neck the painting and the tress,
And held them up : she saw them, and a day 95
Rose from the distance on her memory,
When the good Queen, her mother, shore the tress
With kisses, ere the days of Lady Blanche :
And then once more she look’d at my pale face :
Till understanding all the foolish work 100
Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,
Her iron will was broken in her mind ;
Her noble heart was molten in her breast ;
She bow’d, she set the child on the earth ; she laid
A feeling finger on my brows, and presently 105
‘O Sire,’ she said, ‘he lives : he is not dead :
O let me have him with my brethren here
In our own palace : we will tend on him
Like one of these ; if so, by any means,
‘To lighten this great clog of thanks, that make 110
Our progress falter to the woman’s goal.’

She said : but at the happy word ‘he lives’
My father stoop’d, re-father’d o’er my wounds.
So those two foes above my fallen life,
With brow to brow like night and evening mixt 115
Their dark and grey, while Psyche ever stole
A little nearer, till the babe that by us,
Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden brede,
Lay like a new-fall’n meteor on the grass,

Uncared for, spied its mother and began 120
A blind and babbling laughter, and to dance
Its body, and reach its fatling innocent arms
And lazy lingering fingers. She the appeal
Brook'd not, but clamouring out ' Mine — mine — not
yours,

It is not yours, but mine : give me the child ' 125
Ceased all on tremble : piteous was the cry :
So stood the unhappy mother open-mouth'd,
And turn'd each face her way : wan was her cheek
With hollow watch, her blooming mantle torn,
Red grief and mother's hunger in her eye, 130
And down dead-heavy sank her curls, and half
The sacred mother's bosom, panting, burst
The laces toward her babe ; but she nor cared
Nor knew it, clamouring on, till Ida heard,
Look'd up, and rising slowly from me, stood 135
Erect and silent, striking with her glance
The mother, me, the child ; but he that lay
Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,
Trail'd himself up on one knee : then he drew
Her robe to meet his lips, and down she look'd 140
At the arm'd man sideways, pitying as it seem'd,
Or self-involved¹ ; but when she learnt his face,
Remembering his ill-omen'd song, arose
Once more thro' all her height, and o'er him grew
Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand 145
When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and he said :

¹ Rapt in her own thoughts.

'O fair and strong and terrible! Lioness
 That with your long locks play the Lion's mane!
 But Love and Nature, these are two more terrible
 And stronger. See, your foot is on our necks, 150
 We vanquish'd, you the victor of your will.
 What would you more? give her the child! remain
 Orb'd in your isolation: he is dead,
 Or all as dead: henceforth we let you be:
 Win you the hearts of women; and beware 155
 Lest, where you seek the common¹ love of these,
 The common¹ hate with the revolving wheel
 Should drag you down, and some great Nemesis²
 Break from a darken'd future, crown'd with fire,
 And tread you out for ever: but howsoe'er 160
 Fix'd in yourself, never in your own arms
 To hold your own, deny not hers to her,
 Give her the child! O if, I say, you keep
 One pulse that beats true woman, if you loved
 The breast that fed or arm that dandled you, 165
 Or own one port³ of sense not flint to prayer,
 Give her the child! or if you scorn to lay it,
 Yourself, in hands so lately claspt with yours,
 Or speak to her, your dearest, her one fault
 The tenderness, not yours, that could not kill, 170
 Give *me* it: *I* will give it her.'

He said:

At first her eye with slow dilation roll'd

¹ General, unanimous.

² The Goddess of Retribution.

³ Portal.

Dry flame, she listening ; after sank and sank
And, into mournful twilight mellowing, dwelt
Full on the child ; she took it : Pretty bud ! 175
Lily of the vale ! half-open'd bell of the woods !
Sole comfort of my dark hour, when a world
Of traitorous friend and broken system made
No purple in the distance, mystery,
Pledge of a love not to be mine, farewell ; 180
These men are hard upon us as of old,
We two must part ; and yet how fain was I
To dream thy cause embraced in mine, to think
I might be something to thee, when I felt
Thy helpless warmth about my barren breast 185
In the dead prime¹ : but may thy mother prove
As true to thee as false, false, false to me !
And, if thou needs must bear the yoke, I wish it
Gentle as freedom ' — here she kiss'd it : then —
' All good go with thee ! take it Sir,' and so 190
Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed hands,
Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as she sprang
To meet it, with an eye that swum in thanks ;
Then felt it sound and whole from head to foot,
And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close enough, 195
And in her hunger mouth'd and mumbled it,
And hid her bosom with it ; after that
Put on more calm and added suppliantly :

¹ Those hushed, chill hours just before dawn, when vitality is at its lowest ebb.

‘ We two were friends : I go to mine own land
 For ever : find some other : as for me 200
 I scarce am fit for your great plans : yet speak to me,
 Say one soft word and let me part ¹ forgiven.’

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.
 Then Arac. ‘ Ida — ’sdeath ! you blame the man ;
 You wrong yourselves — the woman is so hard 205
 Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me !
 I am your warrior : I and mine have fought
 Your battle : kiss her : take her hand, she weeps :
 ’Sdeath ! I would sooner fight thrice o’er than see it.’

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the ground, 210
 And reddening in the furrows of his chin,
 And moved beyond his custom, Gama said :

‘ I’ve heard that there is iron in the blood,
 And I believe it. Not one word ? not one ?
 Whence drew you this steel temper ? not from me, 215
 Not from your mother, now a saint with saints.
 She said you had a heart — I heard her say it —
 “ Our Ida has a heart ” — just ere she died —
 “ But see that some one with authority
 Be near her still ” and I — I sought for one — 220
 All people said she had authority —
 The Lady Blanche : much profit ! Not one word ;
 No ! tho’ your father sues : see how you stand
 Stiff as Lot’s wife, and all the good knights maim’d,

¹ Depart.

I trust that there is no one hurt to death, 225
For your wild whim: and was it then for this,
Was it for this we gave our palace up,
Where we withdrew from summer heats and state,
And had our wine and chess beneath the planes,
And many a pleasant hour with her that's gone, 230
Ere you were born to vex us? Is it kind?
Speak to her I say: is this not she of whom,
When first she came, all flush'd you said to me
Now had you got a friend of your own age,
Now could you share your thought; now should men see
Two women faster welded in one love 236
Than pairs of wedlock; she you walk'd with, she
You talk'd with, whole nights long, up in the tower,
Of sine and arc, spheroid and azimuth,
And right ascension, Heaven knows what; and now 240
A word, but one, one little kindly word,
Not one to spare her: out upon you, flint!
You love nor her, nor me, nor any; nay,
You shame your mother's judgement too. Not one?
You will not? well — no heart have you, or such 245
As fancies like the vermin in a nut
Have fretted all to dust and bitterness.'
So said the small King moved beyond his wont.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of her force
By many a varying influence and so long. 250
Down thro' her limbs a drooping languor wept:
Her head a little bent; and on her mouth

A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded moon
 In a still water : then brake out my sire,
 Lifting his grim head from my wounds. ‘O you, 255
 Woman, whom we thought woman even now,
 And were half fool’d to let you tend our son,
 Because he might have wish’d it — but we see
 The accomplice of your madness unforgiven, 259
 And think that you might mix his draught with death,
 When your skies change again : the rougher hand
 Is safer : on to the tents : take up the Prince.’

He rose, and while each ear was prick’d to attend
 A tempest, thro’ the cloud that dimm’d her broke
 A genial warmth and light once more, and shone 265
 Thro’ glittering drops on her sad friend.

‘Come hither.

O Psyche,’ she cried out, ‘embrace me, come,
 Quick while I melt ; make reconciliation sure
 With one that cannot keep her mind an hour :
 Come to the hollow heart they slander so ! 270
 Kiss and be friends, like children being chid !
 I seem no more : I want forgiveness too :
 I should have had to do with none but maids,
 That have no links with men. Ah false but dear,
 Dear traitor, too much loved, why? — why? — Yet
 see,
 Before these Kings we embrace you yet once more 276
 With all forgiveness, all oblivion,
 And trust, not love, you less.

And now, O sire,

Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait upon him,
Like mine own brother. For my debt to him, 280
This nightmare weight of gratitude, I know it;
Taunt me no more: yourself and yours shall have
Free adit¹; we will scatter all our maids
Till happier times each to her proper² hearth:
What use to keep them here — now? grant my prayer.
Help, father, brother, help; speak to the King: 286
Thaw this male nature to some touch of that
Which kills me with myself, and drags me down
From my fixt height to mob me up with all
The soft and milky rabble of womankind, 290
Poor weakling ev'n as they are.'

Passionate tears

Follow'd: the King replied not: Cyril said;
'Your brother, Lady, — Florian, — ask for him
Of your great Head — for he is wounded too —
That you may tend upon him with the Prince.' 295
'Ay so,' said Ida with a bitter smile,
'Our laws are broken: let him enter too.'
Then Violet, she that sang the mournful song,
And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,
Petition'd too for him. 'Ay so,' she said, 300
'I stagger in the stream: I cannot keep
My heart an eddy from the brawling hour:
We break our laws with ease, but let it be.'
'Ay so?' said Blanche: 'Amazed am I to hear

¹ Access.

² Own.

Your Highness : but your Highness breaks with ease 305
The law your Highness did not make : 'twas I.
I had been wedded wife, I knew mankind,
And block'd them out : but these men came to woo
Your Highness — verily I think to win.'

So she, and turn'd askance a wintry eye : 310
But Ida with a voice, that like a bell
Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling tower,
Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and scorn.

' Fling our doors wide ! all, all, not one, but all,
Not only he, but by my mother's soul, 315
Whatever man lies wounded, friend or foe,
Shall enter, if he will. Let our girls flit,
Till the storm die ! but had you stood by us,
The roar that breaks the Pharos from his base
Had left us rock. She fain would sting us too, 320
But shall not. Pass, and mingle with your likes.
We brook no further insult but are gone.'

She turn'd ; the very nape of her white neck
Was rosed with indignation : but the Prince
Her brother came ; the King her father charm'd 325
Her wounded soul with words : nor did mine own
Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead weights, and bare
Straight to the doors : to them the doors gave way
Groaning, and in the Vestal entry shriek'd 330

The virgin marble under iron heels :
 And on they mov'd and gain'd the hall, and there
 Rested : but great the crush was, and each base,
 To left and right, of those tall columns drown'd
 In silken fluctuation and the swarm 335
 Of female whisperers : at the further end
 Was Ida by the throne, the two great cats
 Close by her, like supporters on a shield,
 Bow-back'd with fear : but in the centre stood
 The common men with rolling eyes ; amazed 340
 They glared upon the women, and aghast
 The women stared at these, all silent, save
 When armour clash'd or jingled, while the day,
 Descending, struck athwart the hall, and shot
 A flying splendour out of brass and steel, 345
 That o'er the statues leapt from head to head,
 Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,
 Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on flame,
 And now and then an echo started up,
 And shuddering fled from room to room, and died 350
 Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice
 Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance¹ :
 And me they bore up the broad stairs, and thro'
 The long-laid galleries past a hundred doors
 To one deep chamber shut from sound, and due² 355
 To languid limbs and sickness ; left me in it ;
 And others elsewhere they laid ; and all

¹ Orders,² Devoted.

That afternoon a sound arose of hoof
And chariot, many a maiden passing home
Till happier times ; but some were left of those
Held sagest, and the great lords out and in,
From those two hosts that lay beside the walls,
Walk'd at their will, and everything was changed.

360

Ask me no more : the moon may draw the sea ;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and take the shape
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape ;
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee ?
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : what answer should I give ?
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye :
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die !
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live ;
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more : thy fate and mine are seal'd :
I strove against the stream and all in vain :
Let the great river take me to the main :
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield ;
Ask me no more.

VII

So was their sanctuary violated,
So their fair college turn'd to hospital ;
At first with all confusion : by and by
Sweet order lived again with other laws :
A kindlier influence reign'd ; and everywhere 5
Low voices with the ministering hand
Hung round the sick : the maidens came, they talk'd,
They sang, they read : till she not fair began

To gather light, and she that was became
 Her former beauty treble ; and to and fro 10
 With books, with flowers, with angel offices,
 Like creatures native unto gracious act,
 And in their own clear element, they moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,
 And hatred of her weakness, blent with shame. 15
 Old studies fail'd ; seldom she spoke : but oft
 Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone for hours
 On that disastrous leaguer,¹ swarms of men
 Darkening her female field : void was her use,
 And she as one that climbs a peak to gaze 20
 O'er land and main, and sees a great black cloud
 Drag inward from the deeps, a wall of night,
 Blot out the slope of sea from verge² to shore,
 And suck the blinding splendour from the sand,
 And quenching lake by lake and tarn³ by tarn 25
 Expunge the world : so fared she gazing there ;
 So blacken'd all her world in secret, blank
 And waste it seem'd and vain ; till down she came,
 And found fair peace once more among the sick.

And twilight dawn'd ; and morn by morn the lark 30
 Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres, but I
 Lay silent in the muffled cage of life :
 And twilight gloom'd ; and broader-grown the bowers
 Drew the great night into themselves, and Heaven,

¹ Camp.² Horizon.³ Mountain pool.

Star after star, arose and fell ; but I, 35
Deeper than those weird doubts could reach me, lay
Quite sunder'd from the moving Universe,
Nor knew what eye was on me, nor the hand
That nursed me, more than infants in their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian : with her oft 40
Melissa came ; for Blanche had gone, but left
Her child among us, willing she should keep
Court-favour: here and there the small bright head,
A light of healing, glanced about the couch,
Or thro' the parted silks¹ the tender face 45
Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded man
With blush and smile, a medicine in themselves
To wile the length from languorous hours, and draw
The sting from pain ; nor seem'd it strange that soon
He rose up whole, and those fair charities 50
Join'd at her side ; nor stranger seem'd that hearts
So gentle, so employ'd, should close in love,
Than when two dewdrops on the petal shake
To the same sweet air, and tremble deeper down,
And slip at once all-fragrant into one. 55

Less prosperously the second suit obtain'd²
At first with Psyche. Not tho' Blanche had sworn
That after that dark night among the fields
She needs must wed him for her own good name ;
Not tho' he built upon the babe restored ; 60

¹ The silken bed-curtains.

² Prevailed.

Nor tho' she liked him, yielded she, but fear'd
To incense the Head once more : till on a day
When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind
Seen but of Psyche : on her foot she hung
A moment, and she heard, at which her face 65
A little flush'd, and she past on : but each
Assumed from thence a half-consent involved
In stillness, plighted troth, and were at peace.

Nor only these : Love in the sacred halls
Held carnival at will, and flying struck 70
With showers of random sweet on maid and man.
Nor did her father cease to press my claim,
Nor did mine own, now reconciled ; nor yet
Did those twin brothers, risen again and whole ;
Nor Arac, satiate with his victory. 75

But I lay still, and with me oft she sat :
Then came a change ; for sometimes I would catch
Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,
And fling it like a viper off, and shriek
' You are not Ida ; ' clasp it once again, 80
And call her Ida, tho' I knew her not,
And call her sweet, as if in irony,
And call her hard and cold, which seem'd a truth :
And still she fear'd that I should lose my mind,
And often she believed that I should die : 85
Till out of long frustration of her care,
And pensive tendance in the all-weary noons,

And watches in the dead, the dark, when clocks
Throbb'd thunder thro' the palace floors, or call'd
On flying 'Time from all their silver tongues — 90
And out of memories of her kindlier days,
And sidelong glances at my father's grief,
And at the happy lovers heart in heart —
And out of hauntings of my spoken love,
And lonely listenings to my mutter'd dream, 95
And often feeling of the helpless hands,
And wordless broodings on the wasted cheek —
From all a closer interest flourish'd up,
Tenderness touch by touch, and last, to these,
Love, like an Alpine harebell hung with tears 100
By some cold morning glacier ; frail at first
And feeble, all unconscious of itself,
But such as gather'd colour day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close to death
For weakness : it was evening : silent light 105
Slept on the painted walls, wherein were wrought
Two grand designs ; for on one side arose
The women up in wild revolt, and storm'd
At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes, they cramm'd
The forum, and half-crush'd among the rest 110
A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the other side
Hortensia spoke against the tax ; behind,
A train of dames : by ax and eagle sat,
With all their foreheads drawn in Roman scowls,
And half the wolf's-milk curdled in their veins, 115

The fierce triumvirs ; and before them paused
Hortensia pleading : angry was her face.

I saw the forms : I knew not where I was :
They did but look like hollow shows : nor more
Sweet Ida : palm to palm she sat : the dew 120
Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her shape
And rounder seem'd : I moved : I sigh'd : a touch
Came round my wrist, and tears upon my hand :
Then all for languor and self-pity ran
Mine down my face, and with what life I had, 125
And like a flower that cannot all unfold,
So drench'd it is with tempest, to the sun,
Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on her
Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd whisperingly :

‘ If you be, what I think you, some sweet dream, 130
I would but ask you to fulfil yourself :
But if you be that Ida whom I knew,
I ask you nothing : only, if a dream,
Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die to-night.
Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die.’ 135

I could no more, but lay like one in trance,
That hears his burial talk'd of by his friends,
And cannot speak, nor move, nor make one sign,
But lies and dreads his doom. She turn'd ; she paused ;
She stoop'd ; and out of languor leapt a cry ; 140
Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of death ;

And I believed that in the living world
My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips ;
Till back I fell, and from mine arms she rose
Glowing all over noble shame ; and all 145
Her falser self slipt from her like a robe,
And left her woman, lovelier in her mood
Than in her mould that other, when she came
From barren deeps to conquer all with love ;
And down the streaming crystal dropt ; and she 150
Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,
Naked, a double light in air and wave,
To meet her Graces, where they deck'd her out
For worship without end ; nor end of mine,
Stateliest, for thee ! but mute she glided forth, 155
Nor glanced behind her, and I sank and slept,
Fill'd thro' and thro' with Love, a happy sleep.

Deep in the night I woke : she, near me, held
A volume of the Poets of her land :
There to herself, all in low tones, she read. 160

‘ Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white ;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk ;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font :
The fire-fly wakens : waken thou with me.

‘ Now droops the milk-white peacock like a ghost, 165
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

‘ Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

'Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

170

'Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake :
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me.'

I heard her turn the page ; she found a small
Sweet Idyll, and once more, as low, she read :

175

'Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height :
What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd sang)
In height and cold, the splendour of the hills ?
But cease to move so near the Heavens, and cease
To glide a sunbeam by the blasted Pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire¹ ;
And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down
And find him ; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,
Or red with spiced purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine ; nor cares to walk
With Death and Morning on the silver horns,
Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice,
That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors :
But follow ; let the torrent dance thee down
To find him in the valley ; let the wild
Lean-headed Eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and spill
Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke,

180

185

190

195

¹ Point of ice. One of the alpine "needles."

That like a broken purpose waste in air :
So waste not thou ; but come ; for all the vales 200
Await thee ; azure pillars of the hearth
Arise to thee ; the children call, and I
Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every sound,
Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is sweet ;
Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn, 205
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.'

So she low-toned ; while with shut eyes I lay
Listening, then look'd. Pale was the perfect face ;
The bosom with long sighs labour'd ; and meek 210
Seem'd the full lips, and mild the luminous eyes,
And the voice trembled and the hand. She said
Brokenly, that she knew it, she had fail'd
In sweet humility ; had fail'd in all ;
That all her labour was but as a block 215
Left in the quarry ; but she still were loath,
She still were loath to yield herself to one
That wholly scorn'd to help their equal rights
Against the sons of men, and barbarous laws.
She pray'd me not to judge their cause from her 220
That wrong'd it, sought far less for truth than power
In knowledge : something wild within her breast,
A greater than all knowledge, beat her down.
And she had nursed me there from week to week :
Much had she learnt in little time. In part 225
It was ill counsel had misled the girl
To vex true hearts : yet was she but a girl —
' Ah fool, and made myself a queen of farce !

When comes another such? never, I think,
Till the Sun drop, dead, from the signs.'¹

Her voice 230

Choked, and her forehead sank upon her hands,
And her great heart thro' all the faultful Past
Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not break;
Till notice of a change in the dark world
Was lispt about the acacias, and a bird, 235
That early woke to feed her little ones,
Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light:
She moved, and at her feet the volume fell.

'Blame not thyself too much,' I said, 'nor blame
Too much the sons of men and barbarous laws; 240
These were the rough ways of the world till now.
Henceforth thou hast a helper, me, that know
The woman's cause is man's: they rise or sink
Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or free:
For she that out of Lethe scales with man 245
The shining steps of Nature, shares with man
His nights, his days, moves with him to one goal,
Stays all the fair young planet in her hands —
If she be small, slight-natured, miserable,
How shall men grow? but work no more alone! 250
Our place is much: as far as in us lies
We two will serve them both in aiding her —
Will clear away the parasitic forms
That seem to keep her up but drag her down —

¹ Of the zodiac.

Will leave her space to burgeon ¹ out of all 255
Within her — let her make herself her own
To give or keep, to live and learn and be
All that not harms distinctive womanhood.
For woman is not undevelop't man,
But diverse : could we make her as the man, 260
Sweet Love were slain : his dearest bond is this,
Not like to like, but like in difference.
Yet in the long years liker must they grow ;
The man be more of woman, she of man ;
He gain in sweetness and in moral height, 265
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world ;
She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind ;
Till at the last she set herself to man,
Like perfect music unto noble words ; 270
And so these twain, upon the skirts of Time,
Sit side by side, full-summ'd ² in all their powers,
Dispensing harvest, sowing the To-be,
Self-reverent each and reverencing each,
Distinct in individualities, 275
But like each other ev'n as those who love.
Then comes the statelier Eden back to men :
Then reign the world's great bridals, chaste and calm :
Then springs the crowning race of humankind.
May these things be ! '
Sighing she spoke ' I fear 280
They will not.'

¹ Blossom.² Complete.

' Dear, but let us type them now
 In our own lives, and this proud watchword rest
 Of equal ; seeing either sex alone
 Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
 Nor equal, nor unequal : each fulfils 285
 Defect in each, and always thought in thought,
 Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,
 The single pure and perfect animal,
 The two-cell'd heart beating, with one full stroke,
 Life.'

And again sighing she spoke : ' A dream 290
 That once was mine ! what woman taught you this ? '

' Alone,' I said, ' from earlier than I know,
 Immersed in rich foreshadowings of the world,
 I loved the woman : he, that doth not, lives
 A drowning life, besotted in sweet self, 295
 Or pines in sad experience worse than death,
 Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt with crime :
 Yet was there one thro' whom I loved her, one
 Not learned, save in gracious household ways,
 Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants, 300
 No angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
 In angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
 Interpreter between the gods and men,
 Who look'd all native to her place, and yet
 On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere 305
 Too gross to tread, and all male minds perforce
 Sway'd to her from their orbits as they moved,

And girdled her with music. Happy he
With such a mother! faith in womankind
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high 310
Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip and fall
He shall not blind his soul with clay.'

‘ But I,’

Said Ida, tremulously, ‘ so all unlike —
It seems you love to cheat yourself with words :
This mother is your model. I have heard 315
Of your strange doubts : they well might be : I seem
A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince ;
You cannot love me.’

‘ Nay but thee ’ I said

‘ From yearlong poring on thy pictured eyes,
Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and saw 320
Thee woman thro’ the crust of iron moods
That mask’d thee from men’s reverence up, and forced
Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood : now,
Given back to life, to life indeed, thro’ thee,
Indeed I love : the new day comes, the light 325
Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults
Lived over : lift thine eyes ; my doubts are dead,
My haunting sense of hollow shows : the change,
This truthful change in thee has kill’d it. Dear,
Look up, and let thy nature strike on mine, 330
Like yonder morning on the blind half-world ;
Approach and fear not ; breathe upon my brows ;
In that fine air I tremble, all the past
Melts mist-like into this bright hour, and this

Is morn to more, and all the rich To-come 335
Reels, as the golden Autumn woodland reels
Athwart the smoke of burning weeds. Forgive me.
I waste my heart in signs : let be. My bride,
My wife, my life. O we will walk this world,
Yoked in all exercise of noble end, 340
And so thro' those dark gates across the wild
That no man knows. Indeed I love thee : come,
Yield thyself up : my hopes and thine are one :
Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself ;
Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me.' 345

CONCLUSION

So closed our tale, of which I give you all
The random scheme as wildly as it rose :
The words are mostly mine ; for when we ceased
There came a minute's pause, and Walter said,
' I wish she had not yielded ! ' then to me, 5
' What, if you drest it up poetically ! '
So pray'd the men, the women : I gave assent :
Yet how to bind the scattered scheme of seven
Together in one sheaf ? What style could suit ?
The men required that I should give throughout 10
The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque,
With which we banter'd little Lilia first :
The women — and perhaps they felt their power,
For something in the ballads which they sang,
Or in their silent influence as they sat, 15
Had ever seem'd to wrestle with burlesque,
And drove us, last, to quite a solemn close —
They hated banter, wish'd for something real,
A gallant fight, a noble princess — why
Not make her true-heroic — true-sublime ? 20
Or all, they said, as earnest as the close ?
Which yet with such a framework scarce could be.

Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,
Betwixt the mockers and the realists :
And I, betwixt them both, to please them both, 25
And yet to give the story as it rose,
I moved as in a strange diagonal,¹
And maybe neither pleased myself nor them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no part
In our dispute : the sequel of the tale 30
Had touch'd her ; and she sat, she pluck'd the grass,
She flung it from her, thinking : last, she fixt
A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,
' You — tell us what we are ' who might have told,
For she was cramm'd with theories out of books, 35
But that there rose a shout : the gates were closed
At sunset, and the crowd were swarming now,
To take their leave, about the garden rails.

So I and some went out to these : we climb'd
The slope to Vivian-place, and turning saw 40
The happy valleys, half in light, and half
Far-shadowing from the west, a land of peace ;
Grey halls alone among their massive groves ;
Trim hamlets ; here and there a rustic tower
Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths of wheat ; 45
The shimmering glimpses of a stream ; the seas ;
A red sail, or a white ; and far beyond,
Imagined more than seen, the skirts of France.

¹ The resultant of two opposing forces.

‘Look there, a garden!’ said my college friend,
The Tory member’s elder son, ‘and there!’ 50
God bless the narrow sea which keeps her off,
And keeps our Britain, whole within herself,
A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled —
Some sense of duty, something of a faith,
Some reverence for the laws ourselves have made, 55
Some patient force to change them when we will,
Some civic manhood firm against the crowd —
But yonder, whiff! there comes a sudden heat,
The gravest citizen seems to lose his head,
The king is scared, the soldier will not fight, 60
The little boys begin to shoot and stab,
A kingdom topples over with a shriek
Like an old woman, and down rolls the world
In mock heroics stranger than our own;
Revolts, republics, revolutions, most 65
No graver than a schoolboys’ barring out;
Too comic for the solemn things they are,
Too solemn for the comic touches in them,
Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream
As some of theirs — God bless the narrow seas! 70
I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad.’

‘Have patience,’ I replied, ‘ourselves are full
Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams
Are but the needful preludes of the truth:
For me, the genial day, the happy crowd, 75
The sport half-science, fill me with a faith.’

'This fine old world of ours is but a child
Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give it time
To learn its limbs: there is a hand that guides.'

In such discourse we gain'd the garden rails, 80
And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood,
Before a tower of crimson holly-hoaks,
Among six boys, head under head, and look'd
No little lily-handed baronet he,
A great broad-shoulder'd genial Englishman, 85
A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,
A raiser of huge melons and of pine,¹
A patron of some thirty charities,
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,
A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none; 90
Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy morn;
Now shaking hands with him, now him, of those
That stood the nearest — now address'd to speech —
Who spoke few words and pithy, such as closed
Welcome, farewell, and welcome for the year 95
To follow: a shout rose again, and made
The long line of the approaching rookery² swerve
From the elms, and shook the branches of the deer
From slope to slope thro' distant ferns, and rang
Beyond the bourn of sunset; O, a shout 100
More joyful than the city-roar that hails
Premier or king! Why should not these great Sirs

¹ Pineapples, grown in glass-houses.

² A train of flying rooks. See note.

Give up their parks some dozen times a year
To let the people breathe? So thrice they cried,
I likewise, and in groups they stream'd away. 105

But we went back to the Abbey, and sat on,
So much the gathering darkness charm'd: we sat
But spoke not, rapt in nameless reverie,
Perchance upon the future man: the walls
Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and owls whoop'd, 110
And gradually the powers of the night,
That range above the region of the wind,
Deepening the courts of twilight broke them up
Thro' all the silent spaces of the worlds,
Beyond all thought into the Heaven of Heavens. 115

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,
Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir Ralph
From those rich silks, and home well-pleased we went.

NOTES

PROLOGUE

"It may be remarked that there is scarcely anything in the story which is not prophetically glanced at in the prologue."

—Tennyson, as quoted by his son: *Memoir*, i. 251.

After reading the poem through, it would be of interest to try to verify the above statement.

5. **The neighbouring borough with their Institute.** "This would be the local 'Mechanics' Institute,' a social club, with library, lecture-hall, etc., established for the benefit of the labouring classes of the town."—Wallace.

"Tennyson," wrote his brother-in-law, Edmund Lushington, "was present on July 6, 1841, at a festival of the Maidstone Mechanics' Institute held in our Park, of which he has introduced a lively description in the beginning of *The Princess*." — *Memoir*, i. 203.

9. **Five others: we were seven at Vivian-place.** This line Tennyson added in the third edition. Why?

11. **Greek, set with busts.** The Greek style of architecture became fashionable in England about the middle of the eighteenth century.

12. **Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than their names.** With which of the explanations quoted below are you inclined to agree?

"The technical terminology of Botany, consisting as it does of long Greek and Latin words, seems strikingly harsh and pedantic in contrast with the grace and beauty of its subject-matter."

—Wallace.

"*Names*, botanical names of exotic flowers, but, though learned, not unlovely; on the contrary, these names are often strange and beautiful, and this is the meaning here." — Woodberry.

14. **The Abbey-ruin in the park.** In Wordsworth's *The White Doe of Rylstone*, canto vii, is described just such a

"hoary pile,
 . Subdued by outrage and decay."
 "The white doe . . .
 Here walks amid the mournful waste
 Of prostrate altars, shrines defaced,
 And floors encumbered with rich show
 Of fret-work imagery laid low;
 Paces softly, or makes halt,
 By fractured cell, or tomb, or vault;
 By plate of monumental brass
 Dim-gleaming among weeds and grass,
 And sculptured forms of warriors brave."

15. **Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of time.** Fossil shells and skeletons. It would be interesting to see Webster's *International*, or any other large dictionary, for the derivation and picture of *Ammonite*. What other signs of Tennyson's interest in science do you find in this poem? See also *Move eastward, happy earth*, and *In Memoriam*, sections lv, lvi, cxviii.

17. **Celts and calumets.** The stone or bronze implements of the primitive Europeans, and the feather-adorned peace-pipes of the aboriginal Indians. In the first section of Longfellow's *Song of Hiawatha* is told how the Great Spirit of the Indians, the Master of Life, fashioned the first peace-pipe: —

"From the red stone of the quarry
 With his hand he broke a fragment,
 Moulded it into a pipe-head,
 Shaped and fashioned it with figures;
 From the margin of the river
 Took a long reed for a pipe-stem,
 With its dark green leaves upon it;

Filled the pipe with bark of willow,
 With the bark of the red willow;
 Breathed upon the neighbouring forest,
 Made its great boughs chafe together,
 Till in flame they burst and kindled;
 And erect upon the mountains,
 Gitche Manito, the mighty,
 Smoked the calumet, the Peace-Pipe,
 As a signal to the nations."

- 18-9. **Claymore and snow-shoe, toys in lava, fans
 Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries.**

What suggestions of various countries, climes, and ages are called to mind by this array of curiosities?

20. **Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere.** "Chinese ivory balls, carved out of the solid, one inside another. This line is one of the most admired in Tennyson, both for its melody and for the sense that the sound conveys of the preciousness of the little spheres and of their sliding movement one on another as they diminish in size within." — Woodberry.

Where do you find in the line these effects of "preciousness" and of "sliding movement"?

21. **The cursed Malayan crease.** Written also *creese* and *kris*. Why "cursed"? What weapons deserve to be called blessed? If in doubt, read Longfellow's *The Arsenal at Springfield*.

25. **Agincourt.** A village of France, where Henry V. of England, in 1415, conquered a force of Frenchmen four times as large as his own. You can read of that famous battle in Shakespeare's *Henry V.* and, more briefly, in Drayton's spirited ballad, *The Battle of Agincourt*.

26. **Ascalon.** A port of Palestine, the scene of many battles during the Crusades. Here Richard I. of England, the Lion-heart, conquered Saladin in 1192. You can read of Richard in Scott's *Talisman* and *Ivanhoe* and in Tennyson's Robin Hood play, *The Foresters*.

35-48. This passage, together with line 49, appeared for the first time in the fifth edition. Is it needed in any way for the story? What splendour of picture, what echoes of martial sound, what fine effects of exclamation, repetition, and supernatural suggestion do you find in it?

49. **The gallant glorious chronicle.** As Froissart's *Chronicle*, which it would be a pity not to read in youth.

54. **Strange was the sight to me.** Was the sight strange in itself, or strange to the student only because he had been so abruptly recalled from the feudal ages to the nineteenth century?

61-80. How does Tennyson manage to make a description of experiments in physics poetical?

82. **Stump'd the wicket.** The game is cricket, where to stump the wicket is, according to Hughes, to put a batsman out of play "by knocking down the stumps of the wicket he is defending while he is off his allotted ground."

82-3. **babies roll'd about
Like tumbled fruit in grass.**

In what lies the charm of this comparison?

86. **Soldier-laddie.** The tune of an old Scotch song, beginning:—

"My soger laddie is over the sea,
And he will bring gold and siller to me."

87-8. What picture, what fragrance, and what sound do these lines bring to you? What more sacred picture is suggested by the word *aisles*, and what diviner fragrance by the word *ambrosial*? Do you detect any especial art in the poet's use of vowels and consonants in these two verses?

92. **Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire.** Cf. Lowell's description in *The Cathedral* of Gothic architecture:—

"Still climbing, luring fancy still to climb,
As full of morals half-divined as life,
Graceful, grotesque, with ever new surprise

Of hazardous caprices sure to please,
Heavy as nightmare, airy-light as fern,
Imagination's very self in stone! "

100-7. What elements give this passage its vividness and charm?

111-2. English undergraduates are expected to be in their rooms by midnight, when the gates of the college are locked, but more young scapegraces than Walter and his guests have made their way out through barred windows or over a spiked wall.

113. **Breathed the proctor's dogs.** The boys were out of bounds, and the officers of discipline, trying to run them down so as to get their names, had a good breathing exercise.

"The proctors are two officers selected . . . in rotation to preserve order among the students; they are aided by four proproctors and a number of subordinate officials, popularly known as bull-dogs." — Baedeker's *Great Britain*, p. 225 (1890).

Tennyson's son gives (*Memoir*, i. 248) the following verses — which he found in one of his father's old MS. books — as possibly having reference to some Cambridge joke of the poet's undergraduate days:—

THE DOCTOR'S DAUGHTER

Sweet Kitty Sandilands,
The daughter of the doctor,
We drest her in the Proctor's bands,
And past her for the Proctor.

All the men ran from her
That would have hasten'd to her,
All the men ran from her
That would have come to woo her.

Up the street we took her
As far as to the Castle,
Jauntily sat the Proctor's cap
And from it hung the tassel.

140-6. How far is this vision now realized?

159-63. Impressions of student life at the English universities may be gained from Hughes's *Tom Brown at Oxford* and from the third book of Wordsworth's *Prelude*. The phrase "lost their weeks" refers to the requirement that an undergraduate be a certain number of terms in residence at his college. If he is absent from dinner in hall too often during a term, he is not allowed to count that term.

176-80. The English terms are shorter than ours, and the vacations longer. It is customary to attend lectures in term, but to do a good part of one's own study in the vacations. Several men often engage a tutor to "read" mathematics or some other subject with them during vacation. You can learn from Clough's *The Bohie of Tober-na-Vueich: A Long-Vacation Pastoral* how one party of Oxford men fare in spending their summer in Scotland with a tutor whom they nicknamed Adam.

189. A tale from mouth to mouth.

"This," said Tennyson, in one of the notes on *The Princess* left for the use of his son, "was a game which I have more than once played when I was at Trinity College, Cambridge, with my brother undergraduates." — *Memoir*, i. 253.

229. The good Sir Ralph. Would the burning have detracted at all from the goodness of Sir Ralph?

233 9. These lines, with the songs and other passages having reference to the songs, appeared for the first time in the third edition.

PART I

2. This line, which was not in the early editions, is best explained by the ninth and tenth couplets of *Locksley Hall*.

4. A poet's way of saying that the Prince was born in a northern country. Why is it better than the prose way?

5-21. This passage, with all others having reference to the "weird seizures," was first inserted in the fourth edition.

6-7. Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grandsire burnt
Because he cast no shadow.

The human shadow has always appealed to popular imagination. Not a peasant of Galicia, in Spain, will dance alone in a lighted room, for fear his shadow may be thrown upon the wall and he may be dancing with the devil. That the disembodied soul casts no shadow is a familiar suggestion to readers of Dante's *Divina Commedia*, for the spirits in pain first recognize Dante as a living man on seeing, with amazement, his shadow. Conversely, the Middle Ages had stories of shadowless men who were bodies without souls, having sold their immortal part to the devil, and such was the sorcerer whom the Prince's ancestor had burnt. Among the shadow stories of modern literature are Chamisso's *Peter Schlemihl* and an incident of Macdonald's *Phantastes*.

8. **Dying.** Are the "weird seizures" of the Prince to be regarded, then, in the light of an hereditary curse, called down upon his race by that ancient wizard in extremity of torment? Hawthorne's *House of the Seven Gables* has a similar theme.

12. **Waking dreams.** Or does the poet expect us to regard the Prince with a certain reverence because of these supernatural visitings? Tennyson himself had experienced, from boyhood up, this "kind of waking trance" as he called it. "This has often come upon me," he wrote to a friend in 1874, "through repeating my own name to myself silently, till, all at once, as if it were out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being, and this not a confused state, but the clearest, the surest of the surest, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality, if so it were, seeming no extinction, but only the true life."

Tennyson's heroic King Arthur was likewise a visionary. See the twelve concluding lines of *The Holy Grail*. A reading of *Enoch Arden* and *In Memoriam*, xcv, will shed further light on Tennyson's view of trances.

15-7. Cf. the following lines from Wordsworth's poem on the Leech-gatherer (*Resolution and Independence*): —

"The old Man still stood talking by my side,
But now his voice to me was like a stream
Scarcely heard; nor word from word could I divide;
And the whole body of the man did seem
Like one whom I had met with in a dream."

18. **The shadow of a dream.** This phrase has been used by both Shakespeare (*Hamlet*, ii. 2. 205) and Shelley (*Ode to Heaven, Prince Athanasios*), but the expression "man is the dream of a shadow" goes back to Pindar (viii Pythian ode). In a sonnet called forth by the death of the Rev. W. H. Brookfield, a friend of college days, Tennyson wrote: —

"I cannot laud this life, it looks so dark:
Σκιᾶς ὄναρ — dream of a shadow, go."

19-20. Galen, the Greek, was so great a medical authority that his name could justly be used here as synonym for an eminent physician. But are we to accept from this pompous court-doctor a merely physical explanation of the trances?

22-4. The fuller description of this saintly mother is given in vii, 298-312.

33. **Proxy-wedded with a bootless calf.** Marriages by proxy between royal personages, especially when reasons of state necessitated haste, were not uncommon in the Middle Ages. As a part of the ceremony, the representative of the bridegroom came into the presence of the bride with one leg bare to the knee. A very full note on this passage may be found in Dawsor's *Study of the Princess*.

47. **She had a will.** A fact that the great personages who arranged this proxy-marriage for a little girl eight years old had quite failed to take into account.

56. **Twinn'd as horse's ear and eye.** Do you like the comparison? A horse's ear is twin to the eye in sympathy of feeling and of movement.

58-9. According to your observation, is this the usual aspect of the rising moon?

65. **Cook'd his spleen.** Cf.

"At the ships he cooks his heart-grieving spleen."

—Homer, *Iliad*, iv. 513.

93. **Dewy-tassell'd trees.**

"Hung with catkins as in the hazel-wood. It was spring-time."

—Note supplied by Hallam Tennyson to Professor Wallace for his edition of *The Princess*.

96-9. Collins, Dawson, and other critics have noted the resemblance between this passage and the following from Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*:—

"A wind arose among the pines: it shook
The clinging music from their boughs, and then
Low, sweet, faint sounds like the farewell of ghosts
Were heard. 'Oh, follow, follow, follow me!'"

But Tennyson wrote to Dawson, in comment on this supposed imitation: "I was walking in the New Forest. A wind did arise and

"Shake the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks
Of the wild wood together.

The wind, I believe, was a west wind, but because I wished the Prince to go south, I turned the wind to the south, and naturally the wind said 'follow.' I believe the resemblance which you note is just a chance one. Shelley's lines are not familiar to me, tho' of course, if they occur in the *Prometheus*, I must have read them."

100-1. How long did the Prince delay before undertaking his adventure?

107. What is the point of this comparison to "threaded spiders"?

109. **Tilth and grange.** The earlier editions read *town and thorpe*.

111. **Mother-city.** Our Latin equivalent in common use is *metropolis*.

114-5. These lines are not in the first and second editions. The third makes the direct statement: —

"But bland the smile that pucker'd up his cheeks."

What is gained by the simile?

116. **Without a star.** Do you understand that this king is without the usual array of military decorations because he despises such display, or because he has never been man enough to win them? How does his character compare with that of the Prince's father?

121-2. Does love mean the same thing to King Gama and to the Prince?

129. **Husbandry.** The reference is to education in its larger sense, — development of all the powers.

134. In the early editions the line stands: —

"To hear them. Last, my daughter begg'd a boon,"

omitting all that follows to line 146. Lines 138 and 139 were not added until the fifth edition. Are they to be taken as spoken seriously or in derision? If King Gama's tone is unsympathetic, and his character ignoble, is it fair to judge the Princess and her opinions from his report of them?

145-8. Did the Princess inherit her will from her father?

152-4. Is there any testimony here to the domestic virtues of the Princess?

161-3. Notice that the Prince is not nettled because King Gama "seem'd to slur" the Princess, only because he made light of the proxy-marriage or betrothal. What would the Prince have had him do?

163-4.

all frets

But chafing me on fire.

As a match is lighted by friction, so these impediments set the impatience of the Prince ablaze.

165-9. In the early editions these lines read: —

"Set out once more with those two gallant boys;
Then pushing onward under sun and stars

Many a long league back to the North, we came,
When the first fern-owl whirr'd about the copse,
Upon a little town within a wood."

Why is the second reading an improvement? Does it miss any points of beauty in the first?

175. As blank as death in marble. What is the meaning?
Cf. Part v. 70-2.

182. What service do they ask of the host?

186. Is the host a subject of King Gama or of the Princess?

203-4. What do you infer from this as to the extent of the college grounds? At about what time did these masqueraders begin to ride?

207-8. What does this statue typify?

219. For a sign. Of what?

226-7. which gave
Upon a pillar'd porch.

Cf. Prologue, 93-4.

230-2. Are the Prince and his comrades here speaking spontaneously, or in their assumed characters?

233-4. Cf. "As when the west wind tosses a deep cornfield, rushing down with furious blast, and it bows with all its ears."
—Homer's *Iliad*, ii. 147-8.

238-40. Here we need the help of the following passage from Plato's *Symposium*: "And am I not right in asserting that there are two goddesses? The elder one having no mother, who is called the heavenly Aphrodite—she is the daughter of Uranus; the younger who is the daughter of Zeus and Dione—her we call Common."

Remembering that Uranus was the god of the skies, and Cupid the son of the Common Venus, interpret the meaning of the seal.

244. A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight. Tennyson wrote to Mr. Dawson that this line came to him one night at Torquay, "when Torquay was the most lovely sea-village in England,

tho' now a smoky town. The sky was covered with thin vapour, and the moon behind it."

245. How do you interpret the Prince's dream?

SONG

"The child is the link thro' the parts as shown in the songs which are the best interpreters of the poem. Before the first edition came out, I deliberated with myself whether I should put songs between the separate divisions of the poem; again I thought that the poem would explain itself, but the public did not see the drift. The first song I wrote was named 'The Losing of the Child.' The child is sitting on the bank of the river and playing with flowers; a flood comes down; a dam has been broken thro' — the child is borne down by the flood; the whole village distracted; after a time the flood has subsided; the child is thrown safe and sound again upon the bank; and there is a chorus of jubilant women."

In connection with this note by Tennyson, his son prints the following fragment: —

"The child was sitting on the bank
 Upon a stormy day,
 He loved the river's roaring sound;
 The river rose and burst his bound,
 Flooded fifty leagues around,
 Took the child from off the ground,
 And bore the child away.
 O the child so meek and wise,
 Who made *us* wise and mild!"

— *Memoir*, i. 254-5.

Tennyson was not readily satisfied with this song. As he first printed it in the third edition, lines 4 and 13 were lacking. What gain comes through those repetitions? Later, he dropped out lines 6-9, and afterward restored them. What elements of rest between emotions and of transition from one experience to another do they add to the lyric?

PART II

1. Is it for or against the Princess and her following that they are so much in earnest as to rise at day-break?

2-4. Is it for or against the Princess and her following that they care as much for beauty of dress, in their secluded university, as when they moved among men?

8. Sang. Who are the musicians, birds or bees or rustling leaves?

9. Laurel. Sacred to Apollo,

"The God of life, and poesy, and light."

10-6. Is there any feature here which would not be appropriate to the court of a semi-tropical university for men? See the court, making sure — by aid of the dictionary, if necessary — that you have a clear vision of the

"Lucid marbles boss'd with lengths
Of classic frieze,"

of the bright-coloured awnings stretched from pillar to pillar, and of the four groups of Greek figures encircling the fountain. Bullinch's *Age of Fable*, Gayley's *Classic Myths*, Guerber's *Myths of Greece and Rome* or the *Classical Dictionary* can acquaint you with the name and task of each of these nine Muses and three Graces.

19. Two tame leopards. Why does Tennyson give the Princess such pets as these? What is the relation of leopard to cat?

27. Height. An adverbial accusative.

30. The first-fruits of the stranger. The Princess welcomes these supposed students as the first to come from outside her father's kingdom.

31. And that full voice which circles round the grave. Why does the world form a juster estimate of the dead than of the living?

32. Mingled up. Is the phrase better or worse than *mingled*?

33. Is the Princess, who has risen to her full height, as tall as these "ladies" of the north?

34. Why is it Cyril who makes answer?

35. What does the Princess betray in her prompt mention of the Prince?

36. **The climax of his age.** As the poem proceeds, be on the lookout for marks of superiority in the Prince.

42-3. Not in the early editions.

45-52. Note that the Princess gives as her reason for purposing not to wed the fact that she has a great work in hand. As regards these students of the university, she suggests that they marry in the future, when mental training shall have made them more equal mates for men.

53-4. Did they perhaps feel a little ashamed of themselves? And had they cause?

59. **Hastily.** Why?

61-4. This college hall, like the college halls of England, which are usually hung with portraits of distinguished alumni, has its own inspiring influences in statues of famous women, but not those famous for physical beauty alone, as the anointed slave-women of Oriental palaces, or queens of fashion, or any whose higher womanhood has been stunted for man's pleasure.

64-5.

she

That taught the Sabine how to rule.

The allusion is to the nymph Egeria, who was fabled to meet, in the depths of the forest, Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome, and teach him the science of government. Tennyson refers again to the myth in *The Palace of Art*, stanza 28:—

“Or hollowing one hand against his ear,

To list a foot-fall, ere he saw

The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian king to hear

Of wisdom and of law.”

Byron apostrophizes this nymph (*Childe Harold*, iv, cxv) as

“Egeria! sweet creation of some heart

Which found no mortal resting place so fair

As thine ideal breast.”

65-6.

she

The foundress of the Babylonian wall.

Semiramis, a legendary Assyrian queen, who is said to have lived over two thousand years before Christ and to have built great Babylon.

67. The Carian Artemisia. This queen, when Xerxes invaded Greece, joined his fleet with five ships and fought effectively at Salamis.

68. Rhodope. The Greek form of this name is Rhodopis, with accent on the penult. The story that this Thracian woman, "the Rosy-Cheeked," once a fellow-slave with Æsop, built the third pyramid, was current in Greece, but not accepted by Herodotus. Tennyson, following Shakespeare, has altered the form and accent of the name, and has accepted what is probably an erroneous account. Professor Cook asks: "Did Tennyson mean to suggest that the Princess's inaccuracy was a characteristically feminine trait?" It is more likely that the inaccuracy was Tennyson's own.

**69-70. Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene
That fought Aurelian.**

Clelia was a Roman girl, who, given as a hostage to Porsena, one of the Italian kings invading Rome on behalf of the expelled Tarquins (see Macaulay's *Horatius*), escaped from his camp and swam the Tiber on horseback. Cornelia, the daughter of Scipio Africanus, who conquered Hannibal, and the mother of those illustrious tribunes, the Gracchi, was the ideal Roman matron. But why should the Princess place her statue in the college hall? Was Cornelia renowned for any save domestic virtues? Zenobia, queen of Palmyra, long defied the emperor Aurelian, but was overcome at last and led by a golden chain before his triumphal chariot to "make a Roman holiday."

71. Agrippina. Granddaughter of the emperor Augustus. She shared with her husband, Germanicus, the toils of his German campaign and, after his death, dared and suffered the wrath of Tiberius.

She should be distinguished from her evil daughter of the same name, the sister of Caligula and mother of Nero.

71-80. Not in the early editions, which read: —

"Of Agrippina. Leave us: you may go."

72-4. "Let our artists rather be those who are gifted to discern the true nature of beauty and grace; then will our youth dwell in a land of health, amid fair sights and sounds; and beauty, the effluence of fair works, will meet the sense like a breeze, and insensibly draw the soul, even in childhood, into harmony with the beauty of reason." — Plato, *The Republic*, book iii.

76-80. Is not this a princess fit to found a university?

80. Leave us: you may go. Why does she repeat the dismissal?

87-9. How would you vary the simile to suit it to a class of men?

94. Headed like a star. The phrase is suggested by Homer's description (*Iliad*, vi. 401) of Hector's baby-boy, Astyanax, — "beautiful as a star."

95. A double April old. Why is the age of the child so expressed? Compare 92-3 above.

96. The Lady glanced. Does she recognize her brother?

97. Livelier. What is the meaning here?

97-8. Even Dawson admits that this is a slander. According to Ovid, Apollo turned the ears of King Midas, who had failed to appreciate the god's music, into the long, hairy ears of an ass; the royal barber, — who was called upon to make the king an ample wig, — not the queen, betrayed the secret to the rushes, who whispered it to the winds, who told it to all the world.

101-4. For a lecturer still in her teens — and in the Middle Ages at that — Lady Psyche is well up in the Nebular Hypothesis, formulated by the French Laplace, who died in 1827. Cf. *In Memoriam*, cxviii.

106. Raw from the prime. The crude barbarian just emerged from the beginnings of human life.

109. Ungracious. Why?

112. Appraised the Lycian custom. The lecturer pointed out the values of that custom peculiar to Lycia in Asia Minor, — the custom of taking the mother's name rather than the father's and of tracing descent in the feminine rather than in the masculine line. The Spaniard keeps both the maternal and paternal names, but more often makes use of the former.

112-3.

those

That lay at wine with Lar and Lucumo.

In ancient paintings, Etruscan women are shown reclining at feasts with the dignitaries of the land, princes and priests, who bore the titles mentioned.

117. Laws Salique. The reference is to a clause in the code of an early German tribe, the Franks, who lived by the river Sala. This clause forbade inheritance or succession through the female line.

118-9.

touch'd on Mahomet

With much contempt.

"Does she allude to a report once popular that Mahomet denied that women have souls, or had she heard that according to the Mohammedan doctrine hell was chiefly peopled with women?"

—Hallam Tennyson (cited by Wallace).

122-3.

a beam

Had slanted forward.

To what does she refer? What is the picture?

124. Fruit would follow. What is the picture? How is it related to the foregoing?

135. If more was more. If the larger brain really involved the better mind.

144. Homer, Plato, Verulam ; poet, philosopher, and (Lord Bacon) scientist. Tennyson's *Palace of Art* is hung with "choice paintings of wise men," including these two: —

"And there the Ionian father of the rest;
 A million wrinkles carved his skin;
 A hundred winters snow'd upon his breast,
 From cheek and throat and chin."

* * * * *

"And through the topmost Orie's coloured flame
 Two godlike faces gazed below;
 Plato the wise, and large-brow'd Verulam,
 The first of those who know."

Note that Homer's age is stated by winters, as Psyche's has been by summers, and little Aglaia's by springs.

146-7. Tennyson makes mention in his *Dream of Fair Women* of

"The spacious times of Great Elizabeth,"

and of

"Joan of Arc,

A light of ancient France."

148. Sappho. An exquisite lyrist of Mitylene in Lesbos, about 600 B.C. Only fragments of her song have come down to us,—

"rose-leaves when the rose is dead."

155-64. Note that Lady Psyche, as well as the Princess, expects woman's education to find its justification in more equal, and thence more noble and beneficent marriage.

168-9.

as when a boat

Tacks, and the slacken'd sail flaps.

A figure akin to Dante's

"As sails, swelled by the wind, fall entangled when the mast breaks."

— *Inferno*, vii. 13-4.

169-70. How do these verses, in their metrical movement, seem, in the words of Wallace, to "sympathize with the shocks, the interruptions, and the tremor, which the poet is describing"?

177-8. Again, and more certainly, an echo from *The Inferno* (iii. 1-9). Dante and his guide Virgil found written in sombre

colour above the gates of hell a terrible inscription ending with the line, —

“All hope abandon, ye that enter in.”

179. And if I had. But had he? Cf. Part i. 209–10.

181. Sirens. You can read of them in the twelfth book of Homer's *Odyssey*, in Lowell's poem *The Sirens*, and in the fourteenth book of Morris's *The Life and Death of Jason*.

188. It is not uncommon, still, for a farmer to nail the body of a slain weasel to the side of his granary or barn. In earlier times the Puritan settlers disposed of larger enemies in like manner. In Hawthorne's tale of *Endicott and the Red Cross* we have a picture of a rude meeting-house in the forest, with the bleeding head of a wolf nailed to the porch.

205. Who am not mine. Then whose?

222. Beetle. Shaggy, if Tennyson means the eyebrows; projecting, if he means the forehead.

223. Sun-shaded. “The reference of the word is not clear. Wallace explains: ‘Shaded from the sun by the palm of his hand;’ but one would hardly continue to hold one's hand thus ‘in the heat of dusty fights.’ On the other hand, Woodberry understands the ‘jutting eyebrows’ as being ‘so shaggy as to shade the eyes from the sunlight in a fight’; but why in a fight rather than at any other time when the sun shone? and did the sun always shine during a fight? It is difficult to resist the conclusion that the fault is Tennyson's: who is sun-shaded, or what? and how?” — Cook.

May not the picture, which evidently represents the feudal baron in warrior's garb, show “his beetle brow” as if “sun-shaded” by the lifted visor? A lifted visor would project a little, something like the visor of a modern cap. And while the baron's portrait would naturally be taken in armour, the visor must be raised to show the face. It may be objected that he would not wear his visor up “in the heat of dusty fights,” but the Prince is speaking of an old portrait familiar to his childhood and of its immediate pictorial effect. Yet if Tennyson had put a comma after *brow*,

Professor Woodberry's explanation, with which Dr. Van Dyke agrees, would have the right of way.

224. **As he bestrode my grandsire.** To defend him from the assailants that rushed on the fallen king.

240. **Woman.** What is the construction? The early editions read, "A woman."

241. **And glean your scatter'd sapience.**

How far is Cyril speaking ironically, and how far in earnest? The Prince has appealed to Lady Psyche's loyalty, Florian to her sisterly love. To what does Cyril, speaking last of all, appeal?

259-61. Pressing her yet more closely, the Prince has appealed to her patriotism, Florian to her pity. To what does Cyril, again speaking last, appeal?

263. **The Spartan mother.** When these strong-hearted women sent forth a son to battle, their stern exhortation was, "Return with your shield, or upon it." And if the sons of such a mother fell, one of the Greek lyrics tells us with what lofty resignation she yielded them to her country:—

"The mother sent eight sons against the foe —
Eight sons beneath one pillar buried she,
Nor wept for grief, nor spake aught else but—'Oh,
These children, Sparta, did I bear for thee!'"

264. **Brutus.** This is the elder Brutus, leader of the revolt that expelled the Tarquins from Rome. Made consul (B.C. 509), Brutus guarded the state so unselfishly that, when he found his own two sons involved in a conspiracy to restore the evil dynasty, he had them put to death before his face.

271. **A prince, a brother.** Has she forgotten Cyril?

273-4. In Tennyson's poem, *Love and Duty*, he has Duty triumphant. Which wins the victory here?

277. **To-day, to-morrow, soon.** Why not on the instant?

280. **We promised each.** In good faith?

285. I knew you at the first. Did she ?

295. The gracious dews. What are these ?

303. An April daffodilly. Cf. Wordsworth's lyric on the daffodils, and Shakespeare's lines (*Winter's Tale*, iv. 4. 118-20) : —

“ daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty.”

How is “her mother's colour” more becoming to Melissa than the lilac worn by Lady Psyche's pupils would have been ?

313-4. Is Melissa to blame in so lightly disregarding her allegiance to the Princess ? What, in general, are the grounds that justify disloyalty to a ruler ?

319. **The Danaïd of a leaky vase.** Danaus had fifty daughters whom he pledged in marriage to their fifty cousins, sons of his brother Ægyptus. When it was too late to stay the bridal ceremonies, Danaus bethought himself of an oracle that said he should perish by the hand of a son-in-law. He then commanded his daughters, giving each a keen dagger, to slay their husbands on the wedding night. Forty-nine obeyed him, but the one husband whom his bride had not the heart to stab fulfilled the oracle by killing his father-in-law. The anger of the gods, however, was especially bent against the forty-nine Danaïdes, who were doomed in Hades to the hopeless task of filling sieves with water. Lady Psyche has chosen a rather cumbrous way of urging Melissa not to let her secret leak out.

320. **Ruin.** A rare intransitive use.

323. **Aspasia's cleverness.** In the middle of the fifth century B.C., Athens, under the administration of Pericles, was at its height of glory, and the friend and counsellor of Pericles was Aspasia.

324-5. See 1 Kings x. 1-13, or 2 Chronicles ix. 1-12. Sheba is used here, as elsewhere in English literature, for the Queen of Sheba.

331. **Lebanonian cedar.** What associations come with the phrase *cedars of Lebanon* ?

335. What does Cyril mean, or, rather, what does he want Psyche to think he means?

341-6. Is Cyril fond of children?

352-3. What is the significant word, as indicating the sex of the lecturer, in each of these lines?

354. Violet-hooded Doctors. Where did the Princess find such learned ladies to fill her university chairs?

357-63. Does Tennyson here, as in Lady Psyche's lecture, hint at a superficial character in these studies? As superficiality is a fault due to defective training, should the effort of the Princess to improve woman's education be scorned?

368-72. Cyril is a master of invention himself, as Florian's remark goes to show.

383. Is it in keeping with the circumstances that Cyril should refer to Cupid in a mercantile figure? Cf. Part i. 74-80, and 391-5 below.

384. The myth of Cupid and Psyche is one of the most beautiful in Greek mythology. It tells how the soul (Psyche) must be purified by suffering before she may truly be made one with immortal Love. A romantic version of the story may be read in William Morris's *Earthly Paradise*, Part ii, while Lewis Morris, in *The Epic of Hades*, develops the spiritual allegory.

385. Stomacher. Where else in this mirthful speech does Cyril allude to his feminine attire?

386-93. The early editions, which, it will be remembered, contain no mention of the Prince's "weird seizures," have only the line:—

"What think you of it, Florian? will it hold?"

394. "The metaphor suggests heraldry, as if the castles were placed upon his coat of arms."—Woodberry.

410-11. **hark the bell**

For dinner.

So there are occasions on which Cyril himself is eager, with his comrades, to play the part of "thirsty plants imbibing."

414-15. "The colours of lilac and daffodil have a splendid effect when placed together in masses."

—Hallam Tennyson (cited by Wallace).

420. Seeing in prophetic vision the new Golden Age, when Astraea, the last of the gods to abandon the earth, shall be the first to return.

421-4. Developed from a briefer passage in the early editions, which state merely that the Princess sat —

"Among her grave Professors, scattering gems
Of Art and Science."

426. **Falsely brown.** Is the Prince in a position to be scandalized by an attempt at deception?

438-42. How would the Princess have answered these murmurs, had she heard them?

443. **Muffled like the Fates.** Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, who keep the secrets of destiny.

448. **Six hundred maidens.** It would seem (cf. 378-9 above) that Cyril is not good at numbers.

448. **Clad in purest white.** "At the services on Sundays, festivals, and the eves of festivals, Cambridge graduates and undergraduates wear white surplices instead of their black gowns. At Oxford, while Christ Church and Keble follow the Cambridge practice, the use of the surplice is generally restricted to the Heads, Fellows, and Scholars."

—Baedeker's *Great Britain*, p. 225 (1890).

449. Professor Sherman suggests: "Perhaps from windows, back of the altar, that face the sunset." But would not the chancel windows, according to mediæval usage, face the east?

450-2. Cf. the second stanza of *In Memoriam*, lxxxvii: —

"And heard once more in college fanes
The storm their high-built organs make,
And thunder-music, rolling, shake
The prophet blazon'd on the panes."

In Tennyson's sonnet on the Cambridge of 1830, too, he notes: —

"your solemn organ-pipes that blow
Melodious thunders thro' your vacant courts
At noon and eve."

Cf. Keats's line (*The Eve of St. Agnes*, vii. 2): —

"The music, yearning like a God in pain."

and Milton's poem, *At a Solemn Music*.

454-5. Note the spirit of religious consecration in which the Princess, by a chapel service of her own devising, would call down the blessing of Heaven on her labours, — labours not for woman alone, but "for the world."

SONG

"Two versions of 'Sweet and Low' were made," wrote the son of Tennyson (*Memoir*, i, 253) "and were sent to my mother to choose which should be published. She chose the published one in preference to that which follows, because it seemed to her more songlike." The biographer then prints the rejected version: —

"Bright is the moon on the deep,
Bright are the cliffs in her beam,
Sleep, my little son, sleep!
Look he smiles, and opens his hands,
He sees his father in distant lands,
And kisses him there in a dream,
Sleep, sleep!

Father is over the deep,
Father will come to thee soon,
Sleep, my pretty one, sleep!
Father will come to his babe in the nest,
Silver sails all out of the West,
Under the silver moon,
Sleep, sleep!"

6. The third edition has "dropping moon." Which is better?

PART III

1-2. "The opening lines are among the most beautiful in Tennyson, many of whose descriptions of morning have the highest poetical quality; he is, in fact, distinguished among English poets by them, and especially in the point that they are as brief as lovely."

— Woodberry.

Look for other examples in your Tennyson reading.

5-6. In what country did the myth of the Muses originate?

9. **Tinged with wan.** For a similar use of a colour adjective converted into noun, see Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, 589-91:

"A sudden pale,
Like lawn being spread upon the blushing rose,
Usurps her cheek."

11. **The circled Iris.** Iris is the rainbow. "The circled Iris" then denotes the dark circles, with hints of red and blue in them, that might form around eyes which had wept all night. Cf. Shakespeare's *Lucrece*, lines 1586-7:—

"And round about her tear-distained eye
Blue circles stream'd, like rainbows in the sky."

24. **Canvass.** Remembering the original meaning of this word—to toss in a canvas sheet, as in a blanket—will help us understand what rough usage Lady Blanche's tongue had given to the strangers.

33. **If they had been men.** The early editions continue thus:—

"And in their fulsome fashion woo'd you, child,
You need not take so deep a rouge."

In what respects has Tennyson improved the passage?

34. **In rubric.** In red. The word *rubric* is usually applied to the red-coloured words or initials of mediæval manuscripts. How lovingly and artistically such manuscripts were illuminated in the cloisters may be read in Aldrich's poem, *Friar Jerome's Beautiful Book*.

50-2. Was it not rather the part of Florian to comfort Melissa? Why does Tennyson give the lines to Cyril?

54. **Some classic angel.** So scoffingly does Cyril, the incorrigible, allude, even in this hour of peril, to the girl students who, he claims, habitually speak in terms of Greek mythology.

55. **Ganymedes.** The allusion is to that Trojan boy, most beautiful of mortals, whom Jupiter, in the disguise of an eagle, bore from earth up to Olympus to fill the office of cup-bearer to the gods. Cf. Tennyson's *The Palace of Art*:—

"Or else flash'd Ganymede, his rosy thigh
Half-buried in the Eagle's down,
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the sky
Above the pillar'd town."

56. **Vulcans.** Vulcan, whose Latin name is Mulciber, was the smith of the Olympians. The way in which Jupiter, offended by Vulcan's championship of his mother, Juno, in a family quarrel, once flung him out of heaven, is told by Milton in lines of marvelous music:—

"Nor was his name unheard, or unador'd,
In ancient Greece; and in Ausonian land
Men call'd him Mulciber: and how he fell
From heaven they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
Sheer o'er the crystal battlements; from morn
To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
A summer's day; and with the setting sun
Dropp'd from the zenith like a falling star,
On Lemnos th' Ægean isle."

— *Paradise Lost*, i. 738-46.

63-7. Is it natural or unnatural, creditable or discreditable, for Melissa to speak in this way of her parents? Which of them does she seem to resemble?

73. **Inosculated.** Tennyson lived three years in Epping Forest, and, with his interest in botany, may have noted, and remembered in writing this line, the curious specimens of "inosculated" oaks

which are to be seen there. These oaks exhibit that singular mode of growth by which two trees are united into one.

74. "This expression is derived from the observation of a curious phenomenon in acoustics. If there be in the same room two stringed instruments, a note struck on a chord of one will cause the corresponding chord in the other to vibrate." — Wallace.

78. **Plagiarist.** This is nothing so very bad in the way of calling names. One expects something a shade more venomous from Lady Blanche. The original meaning of the word is kidnapper, but she apparently has in mind only the stealing of brain-children, — ideas.

79-80. Did you ever note the flying of a bird-shadow? Is the comparison here a happy one?

88-90. Do you feel that the lack of courtesy in these words is atoned for by majesty? Or is real majesty lacking, too?

97-8. **Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix
The nectar.**

Before the day of Ganymede, it was Hebe, daughter of Juno and goddess of youth, who served the Olympians at feast.

"Meantime the immortal gods with Jupiter
Upon his golden pavement sat and held
A council. Hebe, honoured of them all,
Ministered nectar, and from cups of gold
They pledged each other, looking down on Troy."

Homer, *Iliad*, iv. 1-3.

99. **The Samian Herè.** Juno, or Hera, peculiarly honoured at Samos.

100. Memnon was the son of Aurora or the dawn, and a colossal statue near Thebes, which (incorrectly) bore his name, was said to give forth a musical sound whenever smitten by the first rays of morning. Cf. Tennyson's *Palace of Art*, 171-2: —

"And from her lips, as morn from Memnon, drew
Rivers of melodies,"

103. Balusters. This is the pure form of the word. As early as the seventeenth century it was corrupted to *banister*, which, despite repeated protests, has now won general acceptance.

104. The empurpled champaign. Hallam Tennyson explains this phrase as meaning the expanse of level landscape "blue in the distance."

106. The innumerable rose. Cf. Part v. 13. Cf. also Lewis Morris, *The Epic of Hades, Helen*, 123: —

"The innumerable laughter of the sea."

109-110. Not in the early editions. Why not?

115. At point to move. Where was she going?

116. "Nothing could form a better commentary than this on the real meaning of Homer's γλαυκίδων as applied to an angry lion: it is the peculiar, whity-green glint flashing from the eye of an enraged animal, — lion, tiger, cat, or pard, — and Tennyson exactly expresses its meaning." — Collins.

122. How do you interpret the gesture?

126. Limed. Caught like birds, for venturing too near forbidden fruit. Peasants in Italy to-day smear the twigs of their orchard trees with lime and so entrap whole flocks of thrushes.

153-4. The Princess has scientific tastes and proposes a geological expedition, to which she very graciously invites the newcomers. The "dip" of the strata is their slant to the horizon.

159. The thick-leaved platans. The full-leaved plane trees.

179. Retinue. Accented on the second syllable, as in Milton and Shakespeare.

201-3. What, in the view of the Princess, is the difference between girls of the former type and girls of the new?

212-4. See *Esther* i.

215-6. "For the metaphor (which may have been suggested by the preceding reference to a proud and defiant Oriental queen, but which is *derived* from the bitter and blasting character of the east wind in England), cf. *Audley Court*, 51-3: —

“‘I woo’d a woman once,
But she was sharper than an eastern wind,
And all my heart turn’d from her.’”

Wallace.

231-2. In harmony with Part ii. 45-7.

246-7. The allusion is to the celebrated saying of Archimedes, the most inventive mechanical genius of antiquity. In his enthusiasm for the powers of the lever, he exclaimed: “Give me a place to stand on, and I will move the world.” Δὸς ποῦ στῶ, καὶ τὴν γῆν κινήσω.

261. South-sea-isle taboo. The *Century Dictionary* defines *taboo* as follows:—

“Among the Polynesians and other races of the South Pacific, a system, practice, or act, whereby persons, things, places, actions, or words are, or may be, under a ban. . . . Taboo rests primarily upon religious sanctions, but is also a civil institution. . . . Some taboos are permanently established, especially those affecting women.”

262. Dwarfs of the gynæceum. Gynæceum is derived from the Greek word for woman, γυνή. The name was given to the women’s apartments in the Hellenic house. From these apartments all the higher culture and nobler interests of the time were excluded.

266-70. Wallace comments: “The two forms here mentioned were probably suggested by two legends of ancient Rome:—

“(1) In the Latin War (B.C. 340) Publius Decius Mus, one of the Roman generals, sacrificed himself on the spears of the enemy in order to secure the victory to his army, it having been revealed to him in a vision from heaven that one army was doomed and the general of the other. (A somewhat similar act of devotion is recorded of Arnold von Winkelried in the battle of Sempach, 1388, during the Swiss struggle for independence against the Austrians; this hero, seeing that the Austrian line of spears was impregnable, gathered into his breast as many as he could, and

falling upon them created a gap into which his comrades poured.) (2) A chasm having appeared in the market-place of Rome, and the priests having declared that this would not close up until there had been cast into it the chief element of Rome's greatness, a young noble named Marcus Curtius, thinking that this condition would best be filled by the sacrifice of one of her sons, leapt into it on horseback and in full armour (B.C. 362)."

273-7. What sound do you hear through this passage, and in which words is it most audible? What is the dancing colour?

280-2. Dare we dream of the divine power that created us as of a workman whose work improves with practice?

283-7. Boynton says: "The enthusiasm of the Princess for the study of metaphysics is merged for the moment in a pretty womanly fondness for the golden trinket prize, and in childlike complacency over the aptness of the device." On this comment it might be commented that the Princess is addressing a new pupil, a "young savage of the Northern wild," who may be supposed to need every legitimate stimulus to study, and that the prize does not differ in essential character from the prizes given in men's universities, as the Chancellor's golden medal which Tennyson won by *Timbuctoo*. Moreover, the Princess had reason to congratulate herself upon a device that showed, in accordance with the statements of Plato's *Symposium*, the wisest of mankind instructed by a woman. This was the prophetess Diotima of Mantinea, "the same who deferred the plague of Athens ten years by a sacrifice." For the death of Socrates, see Plato's *Phaedo*.

288-99. Among the courses of study in the university, the Prince has found no surgical department. The Princess, since anatomy is a branch of knowledge, has not finally decided against it, but dissection is repulsive to her feelings, and the vivisection of conscious animals intolerable. In this last she would have had the sympathy of Tennyson himself, who signed a petition to Parliament against vivisection, as well as of Browning and Ruskin. Cf. Tennyson's *In the Children's Hospital*, stanza i, and Brown-

ing's *Tray*. Ruskin, who held the Chair of Fine Arts at Oxford, resigned his professorship when the university established a laboratory for purposes of vivisection.

303-4. There is no lack of womanly tenderness here. The Fates have overheard, and the Princess will be held to her promise in a way she little anticipates.

304-12. The one divine creative act, she says, finds slow realization in the progress of the ages. Cf. Tennyson's *The Ancient Sage*.

313. **The shadow, Time.** Cf. the opening of Vaughan's poem, *The World*:—

" I saw eternity the other night,
Like a great ring of pure and endless light,
All calm, as it was bright:
And round beneath it, time in hours, days, years,
Driv'n by the spheres
Like a vast shadow mov'd, in which the world
And all her train were hurl'd."

324-7. "The Elysian lawns," wrote Tennyson to Dr. Rolfe, "are the lawns of Elysium, and have nothing to do with Troy,—or perhaps they rather refer to the Islands of the Blest (Pindar, *Olymp.* 2d)." The passage from Pindar has been rendered into English as follows: "But evenly, ever in sunlight, night and day, an unlaborious life the good receive; . . . with the honoured of the gods . . . they possess a tearless life. Then whosoever have been of good courage to the abiding steadfast thrice on either side of death, and have refrained their souls from all iniquity, travel the road of Zeus unto the tower of Kronos: there round the islands of the blest the ocean-breezes blow, and golden flowers are glowing, some from the land on trees of splendour, and some the water feedeth, with wreaths whereof they entwine their hands. . . . Peleus and Kadmos are counted of that company; and the mother of Achilles . . . bare thither her son."

331-5. The victory of Corinna over Pindar in five poetic contests is grudgingly described by Pausanias (ix. 22, 3), who would

rather believe all the judges forsworn than admit a woman's superiority: "Now of Corinna, the only woman who ever wrote poetry in Tanagra, there is a statue in an open place in the city, and in the gymnasium there is a picture showing her with the fillet round her hair which she won at Thebes, when she overcame Pindar in singing; and I think she got the victory partly because she sang not as Pindar did in the Dorian dialect, but so that the Æolians could more easily understand her, and chiefly because she must have been the most beautiful woman of her day, if one may judge from the portrait."

346-7. The action of this canto is thus enclosed between a golden dawn and a rosy sunset.

SONG

For the theme of this song—suggested by bugle-echoes on the Lakes of Killarney—and its significance here in *The Princess*, consider the following comments. Dawson says of it, with reference also to its two foregoers: "The song is evidently one of married love, and the growing echoes reverberate from generation to generation, from grandparent to parent and grandchild. Once more it is unity through the family. In the first song a unity through the past, in the second a unity in the present, and in this a unity for the future."

Stopford Brooke considers the cradle-song, *Sweet and Low*, the most beautiful of the songs, but this the noblest, "a clear, uplifted, softly-ringing song. It sings, in its short compass, of four worlds, of ancient chivalry, of wild nature, of romance where the horns of Ellland blow, and of the greater future of mankind. And in singing of the last, it touches the main subject of love,—love not of person to person, but of each life to all the lives that follow it."

Can you discover for yourself any of the secrets of poetic art which give such magical and haunting beauty to these stanzas?

PART IV

1-2. The nebular hypothesis, briefly expounded by Lady Psyche,
ii. 101-4.

5. Is the meaning of this line clear to you? See the picture it suggests, and note its choice of words.

12. Why "dipt"?

17. "The early editions have: 'Fruit, viand, blossom, and amber wine and gold.' *Cold* probably refers to gold plate, not to the wine, as the early reading might suggest." — Rolfe.

21-40. Tennyson once said to his son: "The passion of the past, the abiding in the transient, was expressed in 'Tears, idle Tears,' which was written in the yellowing autumn-tide at Tintern Abbey, full for me of its bygone memories. Few know that it is a blank verse lyric." — *Memoir*, i. 253.

The refrain "No more" was first used by Tennyson in a lyric written at the age of twenty-two and printed in *The Gem*, one of those annual magazines so popular two generations ago in both England and America. That immature lyric, now suppressed, has a passing interest here for its relation to the beautiful, perfected song.

"O sad *No more!* O sweet *No more!*

O strange *No more!*

By a mossed brookbank on a stone

I smelt a wildwood flower alone;

There was a ringing in my ears,

And both my eyes gushed out with tears.

Surely all pleasant things had gone before,

Low-buried fathom-deep beneath with thee,

NO MORE!"

47-8. See *Odyssey*, xii. The mariners of Ulysses, however, had their ears crammed with wax, not wool, to shut from their hearing the sweet, vague Siren voices, "fatal to men."

51-6. The Princess is speaking here as the young Wordsworth or as Shelley might have spoken, welcoming those European revo-

made as like as possible in colour and workmanship, and in size generally about one or two cubits in length; and showing this to each of the company, he says, 'Look upon this, then drink and enjoy yourself; for when dead you will be like this.'"

The mediæval monk often kept a skull in his cell, and there are stories of mediæval barons who, in gloomy mood, would seat a skeleton at their banquets.

70-2. Cf. Part iii. 193-5.

75-98. "This lyric and the 'Tears, idle tears' are the best of Tennyson's imitations of the 'isometric songs' of Theocritus; songs which, retaining the metrical form of the surrounding narrative, triumph through sheer perfection of rhythmic feeling, so that the ear hardly notices even the absence of rhyme." — Boynton.

The song was first composed in rhyme.

99-103. The Prince's treble was enough to move their mirth, but their laughter was strange even to themselves, for strange influences were in the air. So the suitors of Penelope, when Ulysses came disguised into their midst, were so confused by the spells of the unseen Pallas that they, says Homer (*Odyssey*, xx. 347), "laughed with other men's jaws."

103-7. The bulbul is a bird of the thrush family, sometimes called the nightingale of the east. Gulistan means rose-garden. The Persian poets (for a happy introduction to them see Emerson's essay on *Persian Poetry*) represent the rose as beloved and wooed by the nightingale, whose song must be thrillingly sweet to win her. The musical abilities of the Prince, the Princess intimates, are akin to those of marsh-divers and meadow-crakes, birds of harshest and most discordant notes, rather than to those of the nightingale. Does she speak with sharp disdain, or with friendly amusement?

110. **When we made bricks in Egypt.** See *Exodus* i. 8-14. Out of what Egyptian bondage have the Princess and her maidens come?

115-24. Not in the early editions.

121. Valkyrian. The Princess, though herself of the South-land, knows the Norse mythology. The Valkyrs, Choosers of the Slain, are the warrior-maids of Odin. They ride in a bright-armoured host through the Arctic heavens, their spears and lances flashing out the Northern Lights, to hover over battle-fields and claim the souls of the bravest for Valhalla, Odin's banquet-hall. Of these was Brynhild, the Victory-Wafer, whose tale is re-told from the Norse by William Morris in his epic poem, *Sigurd the Volsung*. It is noble reading.

122-3. Cf. Miriam's song, *Exodus*, xv. 20-1.

130. Owed. Due, as in the early editions. The Princess smarts at the recollection that she is "owed" to the Prince.

131-3. Boynton's comment, a little over-spiced, is as follows: —

"Recreation does not mean illeness to this woman-scholar. Here she hopes for the musical rendering of some bit of folk-lore, — anthropographical data, she might have said, — but is hardly prepared for the 'local colour' of Cyril's 'careless, careless tavern-catch.'"

134-5. How clearly do you see this "sumptuous head" of the Princess? Is it crowned with golden hair or black or brown? And of what colour are those "eyes of shining expectation"?

137-8. Toward which of these two explanations do you incline? Is Cyril affected by the wine, or reckless through sheer fun?

148-52. To whom is Melissa's warning addressed? And why does the Princess take to flight? Does she realize yet who the invaders are?

159. Blind with rage. Is this in character? Or is it merely the defect of royalty? Cf. 145-6.

160-71. Notice how rapid this narration is and how abrupt the metrical movement. You can hear the plunge and feel the struggle and the strain.

172-3. What time is it?

182-4. "Caryatids are in Greek architecture used as pillars to support the entablature, which consists of the architrave (the chief beam resting on the pillars), the frieze (the surface decorated with figures), and the cornice (the projecting ledge above). The *weight of emblem* is therefore the allegorical adornment of the frieze. . . . As to the origin of the word, it is probably derived from those maidens who took part in the famous annual festival held in honour of Artemis at Caryæ in Arcadia. A late and untrustworthy story runs to the effect that, Caryæ having revolted to the Persians in B.C. 480, the allied Greeks at the end of the War destroyed the city, slew the men, and led the women into captivity, and that the employment of figures of these latter instead of columns was designed to perpetuate their disgrace. Whether the honourable or the shameful origin be the true one, the word certainly means 'women of Caryæ.' " — Wallace.

184-8. Between the statues are the great gates, in whose openwork is wrought the story of Actæon, the hunter who, for intruding upon Diana, was changed into a stag. His figure, in this design, is still man-like, but the antlers have sprouted on his brows and branched out so as to make the spikes of the gates.

192-5. As his thoughts alternate between dark and bright, so his face is now turned earthward, "poring on the glowworm," and now, with more hopeful gesture, to the heavens. And so he paces the terrace until a good part of the night is gone, for the Great Bear (or Dipper), which swings its seven suns about the North Star once in twenty-four hours, has traversed "a great arc."

200. Is this reference to the rules made in jest or earnest?

207-8. Judith was a Hebrew woman who saved her native city, straitly besieged by the Assyrians under Holofernes, by entering the enemy's camp, beguiling the leader and, while he slept, striking off his head. In this piece of sculpture, she is apparently holding the severed head of Holofernes by the hair. Her story is told in a book of the *Apocrypha*, called the *Book of Judith*; in an Old English epic of the eighth century or thereabouts, of which only about a

fourth remains to modern times, and in a blank-verse poem by Aldrich.

218-9. What part in the action has the child played hitherto? Note that the importance of her rôle is increasing.

220-1. Why did Florian slip out at this moment?

226-30. The Prince, loyally defending the absent, holds that Cyril, "howe'er he deal in frolic," is incapable of the baseness of harming "the thing that trusts him." Such is the conduct, not of gentlemen, but of essential clowns, the dull and bestial, — clowns no less in fine and costly raiment than in the ploughman's smock.

235-9. Cf.

"And, like the water-lily, lives and thrives,
Whose root is fixed in stable earth, whose head
Floats on the tossing waves."

— Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, v. 567-9.

Tennyson resented the suggestion that his lines were, more or less consciously, derived from this passage in *The Excursion*. He wrote to Dawson that the figure had come to him from water-lilies "in my own pond, seen on a gusty day with my own eyes. They did start and slide in the sudden puffs of wind till caught and stayed by the tether of their own stalks, quite as true as Wordsworth's simile and more in detail."

239-51. Proctors in the English universities find it necessary to be good runners, for just such chases as this are the delight of undergraduates. The Prince, threading the intricacies of the fragrant-hedged garden paths, doubling in and out among the tree-trunks, gleefully outspeeds the two women pursuers, till Mnemosyne, mother of the Muses, herself overthrows this interloper in her domain.

253-6. This mystic fire, called by sailors St. Elmo's fire or corposant (holy body), is an electrical phenomenon.

"I do remember that in the great and boysterous storme of this foule weather, in the night, there came upon the toppe of our maine

yarde and maine-maste a certain little light, much like unto the light of a little candle, which the *Spaniards* called the *Cuerpo santo*, and saide it was *S. Elmo*, whom they take to bee the advocate of Sailers. . . . This light continued aboard our ship about three hours, flying from maste to maste, and from top to top; and sometimes it would be in two or three places at once."

— Hakluyt's *Voyages* (1598), iii. 450.

Cf. Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, i. 2. 229-34, and Tennyson's *Tiresias*, 110-12.

A single flame, as in case of the Princess, is "Prophet of storm," but a double flame, called Castor and Pollux, the starry Twin Brethren of Roman legend, is a sign of good luck.

"Safe comes the ship to haven,
Through billow and through gales,
If once the Great Twin Brethren
Sit shining on the sails."

— Macaulay's *Battle of Lake Regillus*, xl. 13-6.

See also note on *wisp* (339 below) and the reference there given to Brand's *Popular Antiquities*.

261. A Druid rock. The Druids were an instructed order of the early Britons, described by Cæsar as priests, but held by modern Celtic scholars, as Dr. Douglas Hyde, to have been rather teachers and magicians. There are strange ruins, made up of monstrous blocks of sandstone and granite, at Stonehenge and elsewhere, which have been supposed to be the remains of Druid temples. It is to those massive stones that the "daughters of the plough" are likened.

262-3. See Mrs. Browning's poem *The Sea-Mew*.

In this second comparison the poet has apparently in mind such a "craggy ocean pyramid" as Ailsa Craig, off the coast of Ayrshire (Scotland), about which the sea-fowl scream incessantly, so that the peasants on the isle of Arran account for them as homesick fairies who, fleeing from Arran because of their dislike to the

English tongue, find their only resting place on this sea-girt rock. Does Tennyson mean, by this elaborate comparison, to intimate anything more than that these women were huge and strong? If so, what more? If not, is the figure overdone?

264-8. The rough usage of the child is more in seeming than in fact. She is not crying and "the purple footcloth" is soft.

269. **Folded up from wrong.** "The idea in these words is that as she crouched there in remorse and terror she seemed in some degree shielded from other injury." — Wallace.

Is that your understanding of the phrase?

275. **All the Castalies.** Castalia was the fountain of the Muses on Mount Parnassus, hence the source of inspiration and of culture.

292. See *Jonah* iv.

302-10. How much of this is truth, and how much falsehood?

313. The reference here, as the next line shows, is to a nursery for the growing of trees.

314. **Less grain than touchwood.** Less sound than decayed and, therefore, inflammable.

339. **Wisp.** Will-o'-th'-wisp, or Jack-o'-Lantern, or Kit-with-the-Canstick (Candlestick), or the Friar's Lantern, or *Ignis Fatuus* (Fool-fire), or Elf-fire. It is a phosphorescent flame—once common, but now rarely seen—that flickers by night above marshes and other places where decaying matter may be found. In earlier times, when roads were dark and bad, it sometimes beguiled wayfarers into swamps, and hence the people came to think of it as a tricky spirit with a *wisp*, a torch of twisted straw, that took roguish pleasure in misleading travellers. The matter is discussed at length, with many entertaining quotations, in Brand's *Popular Antiquities*, pp. 798-807.

340-1. Is the Princess too severe? Has Lady Blanche, even on her own showing, done right?

342-3. What is her motive?

344-5. The gestures of Lady Blanche are peculiarly significant. What feeling speaks through them here?

346-7. The British cuckoo lays its egg on the ground, then picks it up in the beak (Pycraft's *Bird-Life*, 163) and drops it into the nest of some more domestic bird. The fledgeling cuckoo, to whom Lady Blanche compares Lady Psyche, takes full possession of the nest, throwing out the young of the nest-builder, as Melissa is now to be thrown out.

348-53. This reference to a Greek myth seems to have led Tennyson to the word-carving, in Melissa, of a Greek statue. Niobe, Queen of Thebes, was the proud mother of fourteen children, and refused worship to Latona, who had but two. These two, however, were the Sun and Moon, and at their mother's bidding they slew — Phœbus with seven golden arrows, and Phœbe with seven silver arrows — the seven sons and seven daughters of Niobe, who was grief-frozen into rock: —

“Childless and crownless in her utter woe.”

365-7. A vivid account of such a rick-burning may be read in Kingsley's *Alton Locke*, ch. xxviii. The troubles in England between the agricultural labourers and employers were at their height some fifteen years before Tennyson wrote *The Princess*. In the poem *To Mary Boyle* he states: —

“And once — I well remember that red night
When thirty ricks,

* * * * *

All flaming, made an English homestead hell —

These hands of mine

Have helped to pass a bucket from the well

Along the line.”

370. Note how the metre palpitates in sympathy.

374-8. Does the Princess now learn for the first time who these men are?

379-97. Contrast the tone of these two letters. And note that the northern king employs (390-5) that ancient line of argument which was used against “Vashti, noble Vashti.” See *Esther* i.

15-22.

415. **Clang.** What is the meaning here? Cf. Part iii. 90.

418. **Sphered up with Cassiopëia,**

— "that starr'd Ethiop queen that strove
To set her beauty's praise above
The sea-nymphs, and their powers offended."

— Milton's *Il Penseroso*, 19-21.

The constellation of Cassiopëia is set high in the heavens, near the North Star. This was by the inveterate malice of the sea-nymphs, who, unable to prevent the gods from giving their rival this starry honour, so arranged her position in the skies that half the time her proud head is tipped downward.

419. **Persephone in Hades.** One of the sweetest of the Greek myths — in reality a parable of the seed — tells how the girl Persephone, or Proserpine, while gathering flowers in the vale of Enna, was stolen away by Pluto, the dark king of the under-world, and enthroned in Hades. But the grief of Ceres, her mother, compelled Pluto, by way of compromise, to yield Persephone to the upper-world for the summer half of the year. The story has had several tellings in recent English poetry, — by Jean Ingelow in *Persephone*, by Edith Thomas in *Demeter's Search*, and in *Persephone*, and by Lewis Morris in (*The Epic of Hades*) *Persephone*. There is an allusion in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, iv. 268-72, to

"that fair field
Of Enna, where Proserpine gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis
Was gathered; which cost Ceres all that pain
To seek her thro' the world."

420. What was in abeyance? And why *winters* rather than summers?

426. **Landskip.** Murray's *New English Dictionary* states: "The word was introduced as a technical term of painters; the corrupt form in skip was, according to our quotations, a few years earlier than the more correct form."

435-6. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* says of seals: "They appear to have much curiosity, and it is a very old and apparently well-attested observation that they are strongly attracted by musical sounds."

448. Your father's letter. Cf. Part i. 158 and 173.

454-60. What would she have said? And what is the cause of this sudden hubbub in the outer court? "It must be borne in mind," comments Wallace, "that this scene took place after midnight. The Princess is sitting in judgement in the Hall, but the greater number of the girls are outside in the quadrangle, which is illuminated by the lights of the Hall streaming through the windows."

461. To scan the verse, throw the second accent on *flowers*. Why is irregularity more artistic here than regularity? Contrast verse 468.

469-76. How far is this figure applicable to the Princess? The *crimson-rolling eye* that *glares ruin* is the red, revolving light of the beacon giving signal of danger. Migrating birds usually travel at a great height, some migrants flying at least a mile above the earth. "It is when fogs and storms obscure the view that birds lose their way. Then they fly much lower, perhaps seeking some landmark, and, should a lighthouse lie in their path, they are often attracted to it in countless numbers. Thousands of birds perish annually by striking these lights during stormy fall weather. In the spring the weather is more settled, and fewer birds are killed." — Chapman, *Bird-Life*, 56.

Tennyson, in conversation with his son, instanced this passage as one of his best achievements in blank verse.

490. We hold a great convention. The early editions read, "We meet to elect new tutors."

493-4. . . . household stuff,
Live chattels.

Wallace cites the Slavonian definition of a woman as "a living broom or shovel."

506, 509. The Prince must have winced at these words, for the Princess, still with that smile of "cruel sunshine," repeats them.

537-50. In place of all this, the early editions read: —

"The voices murmuring; till upon my spirits
Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy
Which I shook off, for I was young, and one
To whom the shadow of all mischance but came," etc.

552. *Norway sun.* "The midsummer sun in Norway, within the Arctic circle, does not set, but is still visible at midnight. The Prince means that the light of his love was thus constant with him, and despair passed at once into hope again." — Woodberry.

INTERLUDE .

This first appeared in the third edition. It serves to mark the transition from the lighter to the more serious tone which the poem now assumes.

An earlier version ran: —

"Lady, let the rolling drums
Beat to battle where thy warrior stands,
Now thy face across his fancy comes,
And gives the battle to his hands.
"Lady, let the trumpets blow,
Clasp thy little babes about thy knee:
Now their warrior father meets the foe,
And strikes him dead for thine and thee."

What is it that makes the song in its final form so much better than this? The intermediate version of the third edition begins: —

"When all among the thundering drums
Thy soldier in the battle stands,"
and ends: —
"Strikes him dead for thine and thee.
Tara ta tantara."

25. *A cap of Tyrol.* Alpine in form and so suggestive of a helmet.

PART V

4. **The second two.** Who were the first?

6. **By glimmering lanes and walls of canvas.** What picture does this bring to your mind?

8-10. What feeling do these lines awaken?

13. **The innumerable leaf.** Cf. line 349 in Milton's *Comus*:—

“In this close dungeon of innumerable boughs.”

Another memorable use of the word occurs in Thomson's *Seasons, Spring*, 568:—

“All this innumerable-colour'd scene of things.”

25-6. After the adventures of the evening and night, no wonder that the Prince, in his ill-used feminine dress, looks like a bedraggled servant-girl who has been tending pigs in the mire. It would be of interest to look up the derivation of *mawkin* and note its connection with *Grimalkin*. Chaucer alludes to

“Malkyn, with a distaff in hire hand.”

— *Nun's Priest's Tale*, i. 564.

And Shakespeare, in *Coriolanus*, ii. I. 224, speaks of “the kitchen malkin.”

28. “The petals of the poppy, when they first appear after the falling apart of the sepals, present an exceedingly crumpled appearance, the result of their long confinement in such narrow space.”

— Wallace.

Have you ever noticed this?

30-35. The early editions have

“‘But hence,’ he said, ‘indue yourselves like men.

Your Cyril told us all.’ As boys that slink” etc.

40-2. Why is the sunrise so violent on this particular morning?

46. **Amazed.** What is the meaning here? And why should Cyril have been amazed?

64-5. Lady Psyche's view of her conduct (see 72-3 below) does not bear out Florian's attempted consolation.

66-8. The comfort proposed by the Prince only exasperates poor Psyche against him and his selfishness. See 74-5 below.

69. **A folded voice.** What do you understand by the epithet *folded* here? What is the syntax of the phrase?

76-8. Why is it always Cyril who touches the right chord with Psyche?

90-2. **Is this self-reproach unmerited?**

93-6. Cf. Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, i. 5. 283-95.

105. **Give an example.**

123. **Lintel.** Define. In one of Alice Cary's poems, *A Norland Ballad*, the king strides over the lintel, supposing it to be the threshold.

125. **Lightens scorn.** Cf. Part ii. 117.

"She fulminated out her scorn."

From what natural phenomenon are both figures derived?

131-2. Note the vigour of the phrasing and make sure you understand the working of a catapult. In the first two editions there follows here the line:—

"And dusted down your domes with mangonels."

Why should the poet have rejected so musical a verse as this?

136. **Flitting chance.** The first four editions have *little chance*. How is this last reading better? What is the metaphor of the whole passage (135-8)?

139-41. Mars is the Greek god of war, and Thor the Norse. But does Tennyson here specifically refer to either? Why is the god of war associated with *iron hills* and *ribs of wreck*? Is that savage pagan deity dead yet?

142-3. It would be of interest to see Webster's *International*, or any other large dictionary, for picture of mammoth and derivation of the word.

145-51. In place of these seven lines the early editions have only

"They prize hard knocks, and to be won by force."

What does the king mean by the *idiot legend*? Is the metaphor of this passage a true one? Do fox and deer, for instance, love their hunters?

157-8.

dash'd with death

He reddens what he kisses.

The fierce old king thinks that such a "rose" of battle is all the dearer to a woman for its redness. His queen could have told him better.

162. **A cherry net.** The reference is apparently to the light nets sometimes thrown over fruit trees in England for protection against the birds.

179. **Glorifying clown and satyr.** Bottom, beloved by the fairy queen (see Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*), illustrates the clown. The satyr, who in Greek mythology was a creature part man and part goat, is more beastly yet.

188-9. What does this tell you in regard to Tennyson's observation of nature? Find other instances. "Most writers would have taken the *white* of the snowdrop as the emblem of purity (as Tennyson himself does in *St. Agnes*, 11), but that delicate *green* seems more exquisitely pure, even beside the white." — Rolfe.

190. **Piebald.** What is the meaning here? The early editions have a curiously commercial figure: —

"Not like strong bursts of sample among men,
But all one piece; and take them all in all," etc.

198-9. When has Gama said this before? With what expression does he say it?

211-4. The chief of these mischievous goblins was known as Robin Goodfellow; if a bowl of cream was set for him, he would often, instead of playing such pranks, do the household chores. "And if that the bowle of curds and creame were not duly set out for Robin Goodfellow, . . . why then either the pottage was burnt to next day in the pot, or the cheeses would not curdle, or the butter would not come, or the ale in the vat never would have good head."

— Harsenet's *Declaration of Popish Impostures*, 1603.

220. You, likewise, our late guests. Whom is he addressing?

222. Foursquare to opposition. "This expression, denoting the best conformation for sturdy resistance, is used again in the *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, 39, where the 'last great Englishman' is spoken of as:

" "That tower of strength
Which stood foursquare to all the winds that blew.' "

— Wallace.

227-8. a thousand rings of Spring
In every bole.

With certain trees, as the oak, each year adds one to the concentric rings that make up the trunk.

229. Birds that piped their Valentines. Is this St. Valentine's day? In Chaucer's delightful poem *The Parlement of Foules* he gives an example of a bird-valentine: —

"Now welcom somer, with thy sonne softe,
That hast this wintres weders over-shake,
And driven away the longe nightes blake!

"Seynt Valentyn, that art ful hy on-lofte; —
Thus singen smale foules for thy sake —
*Now welcom somer, with thy sonne softe,
That hast this wintres weders over-shake.*

"Wel han they cause for to gladen ofte,
Sith ech of hem recovered hath his make;
Ful blisful may they singen whan they wake:
*Now welcom somer, with thy sonne softe,
That hast this wintres weders over-shake,
And driven away the longe nightes blake."*

240-4. How many martial sounds are echoed in these lines? Would such an uplift of wild music really cause a banner to undulate?

247-8. Are Prince Arac and Princess Ida alike in person? Are they alike in mind?

248-51. What is the hour? Is it a happy simile to liken the shining of these three armoured brothers to that of the three stars in Orion's belt? Orion, the blind hunter who loved Diana and whom she unwittingly shot with an arrow, is at his brightest in the winter season. Of course you know the constellation.

252-3. Sirius, the dog-star, was originally Orion's dog. When Diana, to make what amends she could to Orion for her unlucky shot, placed him in the sky, she put his dog beside him. In regard to the changes of colour that Sirius undergoes, Dawson comments:—

"When highest in the heavens it unquestionably appears white, but its altitude is never very great, and when low down on the horizon sailors notice the change of colour referred to by the poet, and ascribe it correctly to atmospheric influences. Sirius has always been remarkable for scintillations, due probably to its great brightness. Sailors in ancient times observed all such things very closely, and Tennyson is following Homer."

Cf. *Iliad*, v. 4-6: "Upon his helmet and shield she caused a constant flame to play, like to the star of summer that above all others glistens bright when new-bathed in the ocean-stream."

262-300. This passage is expanded from one only about half as long in the early editions, which read:—

"and Arac turning said:

'Our land invaded, life and soul! himself
Your captive, yet my father wills not war:
But, Prince, the question of your troth remains;
And there's a downright honest meaning in her:
She ask'd but space and fairplay for her scheme;
She prest and prest it on me; life! I felt
That she was half right talking of her wrongs:
And I'll stand by her. Waive your claim, or else
Decide it here: why not? we are three to three.'

"I lagg'd in answer, loath to strike her kin,
 And cleave the rift of difference deeper yet;
 Till one of those two brothers, half aside,
 And fingering at the hair about his lip,
 To prick us on to combat, ' Three to three ?
 But such a three to three were three to one.'
 A boast that clenched his purpose like a blow !
 For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,
 And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon the sense
 Where idle boys are cowards to their shame,
 And tip't with sportive malice to and fro
 Like pointed arrows leapt the taunts and hit."

In what points is the later passage an improvement?

264. Genial giant. Does Arac resemble his father ?

266. 'Sdeath. A mediæval oath meaning "God's death," as *sounds* meant "God's wounds," the reference in each case being to Christ upon the Cross.

283-5. The saint by whom Arac swore was evidently St. Catherine of Alexandria, a half-mythical figure of the fourth century. She was said to be of royal parentage, and so skilled in philosophy and disputation that the Emperor Maxentius called her a "second Plato." Himself worsted by her in argument, he commanded his fifty wisest men to hold a formal discussion with her and convert her to Paganism, with the result that she converted them every one to Christianity. Then the emperor had her bound to a wheel of spikes, but an angel broke the cords, so that the headsman had to be called in to finish the work. She is represented in art with a wheel beside her — the "Catherine wheel," — and the little girls of Spain to this day play a wheel-game in her honour, singing and acting a confused childish version of her martyrdom.

298-9. What point is this?

305. Some fifty on a side. In Chaucer's *Knight's Tale* we have a vivid picture of a mediæval tournament, where the two opposed leaders had each his hundred knights.

308-10. In what tone is the Prince now speaking, — a tone of earnestness or of irony, of pure sadness or of bitterness?

318-19. Why is this such a telling comparison?

328. An awful voice. Whose? Cf. Part i. 137-9.

336-41. Tennyson's son relates (*Memoir*, i. 475) that on occasion of the poet's second journey, in the summer of 1861, to the Pyrenees, he climbed with a fellow-poet, Arthur Hugh Clough, "to the Lac de Glaube, a blue, still lake among fir woods, where my father quoted to Mr. Clough the simile of the 'stately pine' in *The Princess*, which he made from a pine here on an island in mid-stream between two cataracts. More pines he found had grown by the side of this solitary pine that he remembered years ago."

355-6. According to Herodotus (i. 214), when Cyrus the Great was defeated and slain in his ruthless invasion of Massagetic territory, the queen, Tomyris, took the head of her enemy and, that it might drink its fill, dipped it into a bag of blood.

358. For the arrangements of lists, see Scott's *Ivanhoe*, ch. viii.

366. The allusion here is to China. The Chinese contempt for women may be denoted by a passage from one of their sacred books:—

"When a daughter is born, she sleeps on the ground, she is clothed with a wrapper, she plays with a tile; she is incapable of evil or of good."

367-8. Here the reference is to Russia. Master Anthonie Jenkinson of England, who visited Russia in 1557 (see Hakluyt's *Voyages*), describes this marriage custom a little differently: "Their matrimonie is nothing solemnized, but rather in most points abhominable, and as neere as I can learne, in this wise following:—

"First, when there is love betweene the parties, the man sendeth unto the woman a small chest or boxe, wherein is a whip, needles, thread, silks, linnen cloth, shears, and such necessities as shee shall occupie when she is a wife, and perhaps sendeth therewithal raisins, figs, or some such things, giving her to understand, that if she

doe offend, she must be beaten with the whip, and by the needles, thread, cloth, &c., that she should apply her selfe diligently to sowe, and do such things as shee could best doe, and by the raisins or frutes he meaneth if she doe well, no good thing shall be withdrawn from her, nor be too deare for her : . . . but one common rule is amongst them, if the woman be not beaten with the whip once a weeke, she will not be good, and therefore they looke for it orderly."

369-70. The custom prevailed in India, until abolished by the English in 1829, of burning widows on the funeral piles of their husbands.

371-4. The Ganges is a river of great sanctity, sought yearly by thousands of Hindu pilgrims that they may wash away their sins. It might well seem to a Hindu mother, knowing the hard lot of the wife and the harder lot of the unmarried woman, more merciful to fling her little girl into the stream, with the vulture waiting above and the crocodile below, than to let her live out the full measure of such unhappy years.

407-10. This is condensed from the corresponding passage in the early editions, which read : —

" till she

The woman-phantom, she that seem'd no more
Than the man's shadow in a glass, her name
Yoked in his mouth with children's, know herself,
And knowledge liberate her, not only here,
But ever following," etc.

410-11. Cf. Tennyson's *Ode Sung at the Opening of the International Exhibition*. Another view of commerce is taken in *Maud*, especially in Parts i. and xxviii., and in *Locksley Hall Sixty Years After*.

412. Orbs. A verb. Meaning what ?

414. It is said (by men) that a woman's postscript contains the most important part of the letter. How about this one ?

417. **This Egypt-plague of men.** See *Exodus* vii-xii. The armies of two kingdoms encircled the university, threatening to turn the rivers into blood, noisy as frogs, harassing as flies, sudden as the dark, destructive as hail and locusts, obnoxious to the Princess as all the Egyptian plagues put together were to Pharaoh. But her heart, if not as hard as his, was more constant in defiance.

428. **He said.** Who?

441-2. In allusion to the proverb, "The grey mare is the better horse."

443. **From tile to scullery.** The tiles were on the roof, and the scullery, the dish-washing room, was usually in the basement.

448. **That let the bantling scald at home.** The early editions have: —

"That to the hireling leave their babe."

458-71. Not in the early editions.

460-1. See Part i. 89-99.

475-6. like . . . echoes. Not in the early editions.

481-2. Yet it seem'd . . . fighting. Not in the early editions.

488. **Two bulks at Arac's side.** Who are these? See line 259.

491. **Lord of the ringing lists.** What makes the phrase so fine? How does the whole description of the tournament impress you?

493-4. **Shock'd, . . . hammers.** What sound do you hear in these words?

496-7. — and in my dream

I glanced aside.

The early editions have: "and thinking thus

I glanced to the left."

500. **Cymbal'd Miriam.** See *Exodus* xv. 20-1. **Jael.** See *Judges* iv. 17-22.

507-8. What two princes are down?

508-9. **Yea . . . would.** Not in the early editions.

510. Not in the early editions. Is it a fortunate touch?

513-8. A cyclone. Notice the sounds of it in verse 516.

520. **His own right eye.** Is the right eye more precious than the left?

523. *Psyche's colour.* What colour?

530. *Shear a feather.* From what? **Dream and truth.** The early editions read "life and love." Is the change for the better?

531. *And I fell.* Is anybody sorry?

SONG

"A song of life made worth living by the duty of motherhood."

—Van Dyke.

Cf. the outcome here with that in the Eddaic poem, called the first *Lay of Gudrun*:—

"Gudrun of old days
Drew near to dying
As she sat in sorrow
Over Sigurd;
Yet she sighed not
Nor smote hand on hand,
Nor wailed she aught
As other women.

"Then went earls to her,
Full of all wisdom,
Fain help to deal
To her dreadful heart:
Hushed was Gudrun
Of wail, or greeting,
But with a heavy woe
Was her heart a-breaking.

"Bright and fair
Sat the great earls' brides,
Gold arrayed
Before Gudrun;
Each told the tale
Of her great trouble,
The bitterest bale
She erst abode.

* * * *

"Naught gat Gudrun
Of wail and greeting,
So heavy was she
For her dead husband,
So dreadful-hearted
For the King laid dead there.

"Then spake Gullrond
Giuki's daughter—
'O foster-mother,
Wise as thou may'st be,
Naught canst thou better
The young wife's bale.'
And she bade uncover
The dead King's corpse.

"She swept the sheet
Away from Sigurd,
And turned his cheek
Towards his wife's knees—
'Look on thy loved one,
Lay lips to his lips,
E'en as thou wert clinging
To thy king alive yet !'

" Once looked Gudrun —
 One look only,
 And saw her lord's locks
 Lying all bloody,
 The great man's eyes
 Glazed and deadly,
 And his heart's bulwark
 Broken by sword-edge.

" Back then sank Gudrun,
 Back on the bolster,
 Loosed was her head array,
 Red did her cheeks grow,
 And the rain-drops ran *
 Down over her knees."

* Cf. line 15 of Song.

—Translated by Morris and Magnusson in the *Volsunga Saga*, pp. 114-8.

See also Scott's *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, i. 9.

" O'er her warrior's bloody bier
 The Ladye dropp'd nor flower nor tear!
 Vengeance, deep-brooding o'er the slain,
 Had lock'd the source of softer woe;
 And burning pride, and high disdain,
 Forbade the rising tear to flow;
 "Until, amid his sorrowing clan,
 Her son lisp'd from the nurse's knee—
 'And if I live to be a man,
 My father's death revenged shall be!'
 Then fast the mother's tears did seek
 To dew the infant's kindling cheek."

An earlier version of Tennyson's song runs as follows:—

" Home they brought him slain with spears,
 They brought him home at even-fall;
 All alone she sits and hears
 Echoes in his empty hall,
 Sounding on the morrow.
 "The Sun peep'd in from open field,
 The boy began to leap and prance,
 Rode upon his father's lance,
 Beat upon his father's shield,
 'Oh hush, my joy, my sorrow.'"

3. **Watching.** The manuscript had "whispering." Which is better?

PART VI

1-8. The early editions read: —

"What follow'd, tho' I saw not, yet I heard
So often that I speak as having seen;
For when our side was vanquish'd," etc.

13. Is it natural that Psyche, "sorrowing for Aglaia," should follow the King into the lists?

16. Great dame of Lapidoth. Deborah, a prophetess of Israel. See *Judges* iv. v.

21. Rushes. What does the word suggest?

24. What was the significance of these songs?

25. The mark of the forester, to indicate to his woodsmen that the tree is to be felled.

29-31. Note that the intent of the woodsmen is to sacrifice the growth and life of the tree to their own selfish ends.

38-9. The reference is to the cooling shadow cast by a great tree in summer and to its wealth of autumn fruitage.

40-2. This conception of the woman's movement as a tree perhaps derives suggestion from the Norse Tree of Life. "Igdrasil, the Ash-tree of Existence, has its roots deep down in the kingdom of Hela or Death; its trunk reaches up heaven-high, spreads its boughs over the whole Universe: it is the Tree of Existence."

— Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero Worship*.

46-7.

a day

Blanch'd in our annals.

Rolfe compares this with a phrase in Scott's *Guy Mannering*: —

"The dominie reckoned this as one of the white days of his life." Roman literature tells of marking happy days with a white stone. A red-letter day, on the other hand, should fall in the Christian era, as the phrase is said to come from the custom of printing in red the saints' days — holy days, holidays — of the calendar.

48-51. In the millennial woman-age, the statues of the three brothers who championed the woman's cause shall be thickly

strewn, on every anniversary of this victory, with spring blossoms gathered by "dames and heroines" from a hundred valleys. See Tennyson's *The Golden Year*.

52-7. How many of the warriors does the Princess propose to receive? Does Arac need any nursing?

59. **Burst.** Why does the poet choose a word so violent?

60. Where are the rest?

65. **The tremulous isles of light.** Tennyson explained this to Dawson as "spots of sunshine coming through the leaves, and seeming to slide from one to the other, as the procession of girls 'moves under shade.'" Cf. Tennyson's *Ænone*, 176-8:—

"And o'er her rounded form
Between the shadows of the vine-branches
Floated the golden sunlights, as she moved."

69. **Timorously.** Is there anything in the metrical movement to bear out the meaning of the word?

81. **Or was it chance?** What do you think?

83. **His whelpless eye.** What does the epithet suggest? Do you like the expression?

92. This was what she had expressly charged Arac not to do, and he had done it with a "visage all agrin." As for the Prince's saving her life, if it had not been for him and his comrades, she would not have lost her footing, and her life would have stood in no need of saving.

94-95. Cf. Part i. 37-9.

100-1. all the foolish work

Of Fancy.

With which of these explanations are you inclined to agree? "*Fancy*, her own fantastic ideas."—Wallace. "*Of Fancy*. Of his romantic affection, that prompted the disguises, and the visit."—Sherman.

105. Cf. Part iii. 300-4.

118-19. In the lecture-room, it will be remembered, the child was

"In shining draperies, headed like a star." (Part ii. 94.)

126. On tremble. Cf. 348 below.

At an earlier stage of the language *on* (or *an*) and *a* were used interchangeably; as, "stand a tiptoe," "fell on sleep."

128-30. Note instances of transferred epithet.

157. The revolving wheel. The wheel of Fortune. Cf. Tennyson's song of

"Fortune and her wheel."

— *Enid*, 347-58.

Chaucer gives many warnings against the deceits of Fortune, as in *The Book of the Duchesse*, 644-5.

"So turneth she her false whele
Aboute, for it is no-thing stable."

173. Dry flame. What is the force of the epithet?

179. Explain. Cf. *In Memoriam*, xxxviii. 1-4.

"With weary steps I loiter on,
Tho' always under alter'd skies
The purple from the distance dies,
My prospect and horizon gone."

190. Notice that the Princess replies to Cyril's railing by three courteous words and a gracious act.

199-202. Is this an adequate atonement, or even apology, for all the harm that Psyche's disloyalty has wrought? Under the rule of men, are penitent traitors pardoned as a matter of course?

208. She weeps. Note the effect upon the men. Would logic have done it?

213. Iron in the blood. This is a chemical fact, yet compare line 34 above.

224. Stiff as Lot's wife. See *Genesis* xix.

234. How old, then, is the Princess? See Part ii. 92-3.

236-8. Cf. Coleridge's *Christabel*, Part ii. 77-82.

"Alas! they had been friends in youth;
 But whispering tongues can poison truth;
 And constancy lives in realms above;
 And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
 And to be wroth with one we love
 Doth work like madness in the brain."

252-4. At what is she smiling?

268-9. Cf. Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar*, iv. 3. 105-8.

"O Cassius, you are yokéd with a lamb,
 That carries anger as the flint bears fire;
 Who, much enforcéd, shows a hasty spark,
 And straight is cold again."

289-90. The word *mob* seems to be used here in the sense of merge, yet implying that contempt for women in general which is frankly expressed in *rabble*.

291. **Passionate tears.** Whose?

293. **Lady.** Whom is Cyril addressing? What is his own chance of an invitation?

296. **With a bitter smile.** For Cyril, for Psyche, or for herself?

298. See Part iv. 21.

299. On which side had Violet's cousin fought?

302. "The metaphor," says Wallace, "is derived from the fact that in the middle of a broken stream of water, or between confluent currents, there are formed little circles of whirling water, 'eddyies,' which continue to rotate without making progress down stream."

304. Lady Blanche, who followed at a distance (66-7) and held her peace even during King Gama's allusions to her (219-22), can restrain her wrath no longer.

308. **Them.** What?

309. This speech, like a viper, has the sting in its tail.

311-3. Connect this majestic figure with 318-20 below.

314. In the early editions the Princess speaks at greater length:—

"What! in our time of glory when the cause
 Now stands up, first, a trophied pillar—now

So clipt, so stinted in our triumph — barr'd
 Even from our free heart-thanks, and every way
 Thwarted and vext, and lastly catechised
 By our own creature ! one that made our laws !
 Our great she-Solon ! her that built the nest
 To hatch the cuckoo ! whom we call'd our friend !
 But we will crush the lie that glances at us
 As cloaking in the larger charities
 Some baby predilections ; all amazed !
 We must amaze this legislator more.
 Fling our doors wide ! " etc.

The speech continues as in the final text until after line 321
 Between 321 and 322 the early editions have the following : —

" Go, help the half-brain'd dwarf, Society,
 To find low motives unto noble deeds,
 To fix all doubt upon the darker side ;
 Go, titter thou for narrowest neighbourhoods,
 Old talker, haunt where gossip breeds and seethes
 And festers in provincial sloth ! and you,
 That think we sought to practise on a life
 Risk'd for our own and trusted to our hands,
 What say you, Sir ? you hear us ; deem ye not
 'Tis all too like that even now we scheme,
 In one broad death confounding friend and foe,
 To drug them all ? resolve it : you are man,
 And therefore no doubt wise ; but after this
 We brook," etc.

319. The Pharos was a famous lighthouse built in the third century on an island of that name near Alexandria.

338. The two leopards were couched one on either side of the throne, like the animal figures, called *supporters* in heraldry, that flank the central device of a coat-of-arms. The supporters of the shield in the Royal Arms of England, for example, are a lion and a unicorn.

347. Has Pallas, the Goddess of Wisdom, cause for anger ?

348. Diana, in her heavenly character as Phœbe, or Cynthia, is crowned with the crescent moon. In Hades she is Persephone, and on earth the green-robed huntress. As the moon-goddess, Diana is apostrophized in the following hymn by Ben Jonson:—

“Queen and Huntress, chaste and fair,
Now the sun is laid to sleep,
Seated in thy silver chair,
State in wonted manner keep:
Hesperus entreats thy light,
Goddess excellently bright.

“Earth, let not thy envious shade
Dare itself to interpose;
Cynthia's shining orb was made
Heaven to clear when day did close:
Bless us then with wished sight,
Goddess excellently bright.

“Lay thy bow of pearl apart
And thy crystal-shining quiver;
Give unto the flying hart
Space to breathe, how short soever:
Thou that mak'st a day of night,
Goddess excellently bright!”

360-r. those . . . sagest. Would this selection include Melissa?

SONG

On the opening line, cf. Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale*, i. 2. 426-7:

“You may as well
Forbid the sea for to obey the moon.”

The beauty of this song needs no comment. But is it glad or sad? Notice, in regard to the diction, the preponderance of monosyllables; in regard to the comparisons, their large and elemental character; in regard to the melody, the effect of the repetend in “Ask me no more.”

PART VII

12. Meaning what? Cf. 304 below.

19. Void was her use. Gone was her customary occupation, her days were empty, her world was blank.

20-6. "The magnificent simile is taken literally from *Iliad*, iv, 275: 'As when a goatherd from some hill peak sees a cloud coming across the deep with the blast of the west wind behind it; and to him, being as he is afar, it seems blacker, even as pitch, as it goes along the deep, bringing a great whirlwind.'" — Collins.

But Tennyson himself said, in his letter to Dawson, that this simile was suggested to him by "a coming storm as seen from the top of Snowdon." The poet counted this passage as one of his best achievements in blank verse.

30-1. For lark-songs see Shelley's *To a Skylark*, Wordsworth's *To a Skylark*, and Hogg's *The Skylark*.

36. Not in the early editions, where the next line begins *Lay sunder'd*.

50-1.

those fair charities

Join'd at her side.

Explain.

51-5. What makes the beauty of this comparison?

70-1. **Carnival.** The word is derived from the Latin *carnem levare*, to put away flesh (as food), and thus designates the approach of Lent. Before entering on this season of penitence, the Catholic world still allows itself, especially in southern Europe, a few days of frolic, a "periodical explosion of freedom and folly," when flowers and confetti are thrown by motley maskers, who run about the streets, on any one they meet. A vivid description of an Italian carnival may be found in Hawthorne's *Marble Faun*, ch. xxiii.

What is the force of the metaphor here?

72-5. **My claim.** But what claim had he after he had agreed to stake it on the tournament and had lost? Does not his father, at least, take an unfair advantage of Princess Ida's hospitality?

81-8. Notice the monotonous structure of these lines. Why is monotony effective here? Cf. 91-7 below.

88-90. **Clocks.** Cf. Part i. 212-4.

The dead, the dark. Cf. Part vi. 186.

100-4. **Love.** "Notice how the position of this word, a monosyllable at the beginning of the line, followed by a pause, accentuates its importance as the climax of this long enumeration. Cf. 290 below. The *harebell* is one of the most beautiful of European wild herbs, having a slender, delicate stalk, and drooping flowers of a pale blue tint." — Wallace.

Do you agree with Ruskin (*Modern Painters*, iv. 371) that most of the mountain flowers are lovelier than the lowland ones? And do you agree with Boynton, who expresses the opinion, in his edition of *The Princess*, that "this is by far the most beautiful simile in the poem"?

109. The Oppian law.

"This was a sumptuary law passed during the time of the direst distress of Rome, when Hannibal was almost at the gates. It enacted that no woman should wear a gay-coloured dress, or have more than half an ounce of gold ornaments, and that none should approach within a mile of any city or town in a car drawn by horses. The war being concluded, and the emergency over, the women demanded the repeal of the law. They gained one consul, but Cato, the other one, resisted. The women rose, thronged the streets and forum, and harassed the magistrate until the law was repealed." — Dawson.

A lively account of this incident is given by Livy, Bk. xxxiv.

111. **Dwarf-like.** The early editions read "little." Which is better?

112. The tax.

"A heavy tax imposed on Roman matrons by the second triumvirate. No man was found bold enough to oppose it; but Hortensia, daughter of Hortensius, the celebrated orator, spoke so

eloquently against it, that her oration was preserved to receive the praise of Quintilian. She was successful." — Dawson.

113. The ax was the emblem of civic authority in the Roman Republic; the eagle, of military power.

115. **The wolf's-milk.** Romulus and Remus, the legendary founders of Rome, were suckled by a wolf.

"The ravening she-wolf knew them,
And licked them o'er and o'er,
And gave them of her own fierce milk,
Rich with raw flesh and gore."

— Macaulay, *The Prophecy of Capys*, 37-40.

118-20. The early editions read: —

"I saw the forms: I knew not where I was:
Sad phantoms conjured out of circumstance,
Ghosts of the fading brain they seem'd: nor more
Sweet Ida," etc.

140-4. The first edition reads: —

"She stoop'd; and with a great shock of the heart,
Our mouths met: out of languor leapt a cry,
Crown'd passion from the brinks of death, and up
Along the shuddering senses struck the soul,
And closed on fire with Ida at the lips."

The second edition substitutes in the above "Leapt" for "Crown'd." Is that an improvement?

148-54. **That other.** Aphrodite, the foam-born,—the Greek goddess Venus. Tennyson refers to her in *Enone* as

"Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,
Fresh as the foam."

Do you agree with the following criticism by Bayard Taylor? He says of this passage that it "contains an exquisite, rapid picture of Aphrodite, floating along the wave to her home at Paphos; but what must we think of a lover who, in relating the supreme moment of his passion, could turn aside to interpolate it?"

161-74. "A garden song, expressed in a succession of images which are touched with the white and gold of moonlight." — Van Dyke.

167. Danaë. She was imprisoned in a brazen tower, where her only visitor was Jupiter, who came to her in a shower of gold.

"But yellower now the sunbeams seemed to grow,
Not whiter as their wont is, and she heard
A tinkling sound that made her, half afeard,
Draw back a little from the fresh green sea,
Then to a clang the noise rose suddenly,

* * * * *

And, looking round about, could she behold
The chamber scattered o'er with shining gold."

— William Morris, *The Doom of King Acrisius*
(in *The Earthly Paradise*).

175-6.

a small

Sweet Idyll.

Concerning his father's opinion of this idyll, Hallam Tennyson says: "For *simple* rhythm and vowel music he considered his 'Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height,' written in Switzerland (chiefly at Lauterbrunnen and Grindelwald), and descriptive of the waste Alpine heights and gorges, and of the sweet, rich valleys below, as amongst his '*most successful work*.' But by this phrase he meant no more than that he felt he had done his best; there was no tinge of vanity in it." — *Memoir*, i. 252-3.

The poem rests on the eleventh idyll of Theocritus, the apostrophe of the Cyclops Polyphemus to the sea-nymph Galatea.

"The substitution of the mountains for the sea, as the haunt of the beloved nymph," notes Stedman, "is the Laureate's only departure from the *material* employed by Theocritus."

— *Victorian Poets*.

"It transfers with perfect taste," says Symonds, "the Greek Idyllic feeling to Swiss scenery; it is a fine instance of new wine being successfully poured into old bottles." — *Greek Poets*.

Note, also, the enthusiastic criticism by Woodberry, in his edition of *The Princess*. Having spoken of "Tears, idle tears" (Part iv. 21-40) as ranking with the perfect lyrics of the English language, he continues: "Similarly, the idyll, 'Come down, O Maid,' is of flawless workmanship, but is equally flawless in its substance, and is a marvel of landscape subdued to be itself the expression of human thought and emotion, and so charged with the poet's mood that one cannot divide the spiritual from the external beauty; the development of the poem, the sweetness of its argument, the subtlety of its unspoken suggestion, the rising rhythm and climax of human appeal falling away in the natural images and wonderful verbal melody of the conclusion, are traits rather to be felt than analyzed, though they lose nothing by such analysis. It is the most perfect short idyll in English poetry, and though its literary origin is Greek and its earthly scenery is Swiss, it seems native in every syllable, because it speaks from the common heart of man."

Read in connection with the Alpine pictures of this idyll Coleridge's *Hymn before Sunrise*. Illustrative, too, are the glacier descriptions in Ruskin's *King of the Golden River*.

188. Foxlike in the vine. But the little foxes "spoil the vines," according to the *Song of Solomon*.

189. "In the early editions we find *Silver Horns*, but all the more recent ones print 'silver horns.' The former is, of course, to be preferred, on account of the obvious reference to the Silberhorn, one of the peaks or spurs of the Jungfrau, and markedly the most silvery-white part of the summit, as seen from Interlaken and its vicinity.

"*Morning* walks on the mountains here, as 'o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill' in Hamlet (i. i. 167); and *Death* is her companion because life has no home on those 'Alpine summits cold,' or must face Death in attempting to scale them. Dawson thinks that the poet introduces *Death* into the picture because the mountains in the early light 'have a chill ashen hue, as of deathly

pallor'; but our explanation is simpler, and has been approved by the poet since our first edition was published." — Rolfe.

191. **Firths.** "Firth, or frith, was originally a Scotch word introduced into English literary use about 1600."

—*New English Dictionary.*

190-1. "These rivers of ice, formed in the ravines of snow-clad mountain-ranges, move gradually downwards till they reach the zone of permanently warmer temperature, where they melt and discharge themselves in streams upon the lower-lying districts. 'Huddling' refers to their confused, ridgy structure, due to the continuous pressure from above, and the irregular course which they pursue between the broken and jagged sides of the ravine. The 'furrows' are the crevasses which, owing to the splitting of the ice, run obliquely across the surface of the glacier. The outlet at the bottom is called 'dusky' [in contrast to the snows all about. Hallam Tennyson]." — Wallace.

198. What are these? Cf. Tennyson's *Lotos-Eaters*, 8-13.

199. "To illustrate the material by the immaterial is rare in figurative language." — Rolfe.

It is, however, characteristic of Shelley, so ethereal a poet that the seen world was less real to him than the unseen. He has, for instance, in his *Indian Serenade*,

"The champak odours fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream,"

and in his *Ode to the West Wind*:—

"O wild West wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing."

201. **Azure pillars of the hearth.** Smoke of the cottages.

205-8. "Who, after three such lines, will talk of English as a harsh and clumsy language? Who cannot hear in them a rapid rippling of the water, the stately calmness of the wood-dove's

note, and in the repetition of short syllables and soft liquids in the last line, the

'Murmuring of innumerable bees?' — Kingsley.

210. Notice how the verse labours in sympathy.

215-6. From what art is the figure taken?

245. **Lethe.** A river in Hades, from which the souls of those who were to return to earth in other bodies drank forgetfulness of their former lives. See *Æneid*, vi. 748-51. The reference here is to the period before consciousness, *i.e.* before birth.

248. **The fair young planet.** What do you think the poet means by this, the children of the race, or the destinies of our earth, still young, still "in the morning of the times"?

253-4. Cf. Prologue, 127-30.

258. **Not harms.** An Elizabethan rather than Victorian arrangement of words.

268. The early editions have, in lieu of this line:—

"More as the double-natured poet each."

298-312. It is understood that Tennyson here depicts the character of his own mother, to whom he once alluded as "one of the most angelic creatures on God's earth." The metaphor in 306-7 relates to the music of the spheres, for which see Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, v. 1. 59-65.

Cf. "As soon as I had recovered myself, I said, 'What is this sound, so great and so sweet, which fills my ears?' 'This,' he replied, 'is that music which, composed of intervals unequal, but divided proportionately by rule, is caused by the swing and movement of the spheres themselves, and, by the proper combination of acute tones with grave, creates with uniformity manifold and diverse harmonies.'" — Cicero's *Dream of Scipio*.

"But else, in deep of night, when drowsiness
Hath locked up mortal sense, then listen I
To the celestial sirens' harmony,

That sit upon the nine infolded spheres,
And sing to those that hold the vital shears,
And turn the adamantine spindle round
On which the fates of gods and men is wound.
Such sweet compulsion doth in music lie,
To lull the daughters of Necessity,
And keep unsteady Nature to her law,
And the low world in measured motion draw
After the heavenly tune, which none can hear
Of human mould with gross unpurgèd ear."

— Milton's *Arcades*, 61-73.

330-42. Tennyson instanced this passage as one of his best achievements in blank verse.

332. **Approach and fear not.** Has the Prince, who is certainly talking too much for one who had expected to die that night from weakness, impressed you as a formidable personage?

CONCLUSION

The first eighty lines of the Conclusion as it now stands did not appear until the third edition. The first edition had: —

" Here closed our compound story, which at first
Had only meant to banter little maids
With mock heroics and with parody:
But slipt in some strange way, crost with burlesque,
From mock to earnest, even into tones
Of tragic, and with less and less of jest,
To such a serious end, that Lillia fixt
A showery glance upon her aunt, and said,
'You — tell us what we are,' who there began
A treatise, growing with it, and might have flow'd
In axiom worthier to be graven on rock,
Than all that lasts of old-world hieroglyph,
Of lichen-fretted Rune and arrowhead;
But that there rose a shout: the gates were closed

At sundown, and the crowd were swarming now,
To take their leave, about the garden rails,
And I and some went out, and mingled with them."

In the second edition Tennyson changed the **Had only** of the second line to **Perhaps, but**. Why? And what are the gains of the amplified reading as we have it in the final text?

5. Do you sympathize with Walter's wish?

24. **Realists**. What is the meaning here?

49-71. This outbreak of insular patriotism has no organic connection with the poem. Regarding Tennyson's very imperfect appreciation of France, Stopford Brooke comments (*Tennyson*, pp. 36-7): "He saw but little of what France has done for us; he had no gratitude to her for her audacity, her swiftness, her logical expansion into form of the thoughts of progress. . . . He did not see our cool acceptance of the results for liberty which emerged after the mistakes of France had run their course. She bore the consequences of her mistakes, but in exhausting these she set the true form of certain ideas of liberty clear. We take the ideas she has set free, but we forget that she revealed them. There has been no ingratitude so great in the history of humanity as the ingratitude of Europe to France, and Tennyson represented with great vividness this ingratitude in England." It may be noted, however, that the speaker in the poem is "the Tory member's elder son." Cf. Part iv. 51-6.

66. **A schoolboys' barring out**. The bolting of the schoolroom door against the master.

75-6. What does Tennyson see of happy augury for the world in "the genial day" and those half-scientific sports?

78-9. A *go-cart*, as the word is here used, is a light framework, without bottom, moving on casters or rollers, so that a child may learn to walk without the usual succession of falls and bumps.

79. **There is a hand that guides**. Cf. *Maud*, iv. st. 8.

90. "These are held every three months in each division of a county by justices of the peace (unpaid magistrates) for the trial

of persons accused of minor felonies and misdemeanours, and the investigation of matters connected with the poor-laws and other local interests." — Wallace.

97. **Rookery.** Cf. in *Locksley Hall*: —

"Never, tho' my mortal summers to such length of years should come
As the many-winter'd crow that leads the clanging rookery home."

102-4. Is this a conservative or a liberal suggestion?

109. **The future man.** Not the future woman, although this might seem the more natural subject for revery after such a story.

113. **Broke them up.** With which of the interpretations given below are you inclined to agree?

"Destroyed the courts of twilight by destroying the twilight, *i.e.* by changing the twilight into darkness." — Cook.

"*Broke them up*, divided the darkness by the coming out of the stars." — Woodberry.

116-8. Is there a touch of symbolism here that fitly concludes the poem?

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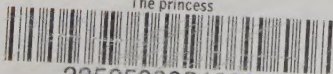
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